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Caroline Schlegel

and her Friends

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CAROLINE SCHLEGEL

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CAROLINE SCHLEGEL

AND

HER FRIENDS

Cecily (Ullman) Sidgwick
MRS. ALFRED SIDGWICK

London
T. FISHER UNWIN
26, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
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PREFACE.

THE facts of Caroline's life I have gathered almost entirely from Professor Waitz's collection of her letters. For other information about the Romantic School, not contained in their own numerous writings, I am most indebted to Professor Haym's exhaustive work, "Die romantische Schule" and his article on Caroline in the "Preussische Jahrbuch," to Professor Georg Brandes' brilliant sketch, "Die romantische Schule in Deutschland," to Dilthey's life of Schleiermacher, to Plitt's collection of Schelling's letters, and to the life of Georg Forster, by König.

In the title I have chosen the surname Schlegel

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rather as belonging to the central portion of Caroline's life than for any more pressing reason. Professor Waitz is content to call her Caroline simply, and there is perhaps some difficulty in deciding under which of her surnames she is best known.

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CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	GIRLHOOD	11
II.	CLAUSTHAL	29
III.	WIDOWHOOD	39
IV.	MAINZ	55
V.	IN HIDING	77
VI.	JENA	99
VII.	"THE ATHENÆUM"	123
VIII.	"LUCINDE"	149
IX.	AUGUSTE BÖHMER	165
X.	DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE	187
XI.	THE ROMANTICS ARE SCATTERED	209
XII.	SCHELLING'S WIFE	225
APPENDIX		245

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GIRLHOOD.

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CAROLINE SCHLEGEL.

I.

GIRLHOOD.

IN Germany the publication of Caroline Schlegel's letters hardly needed an introduction. It was well known that her intimate connection with the leaders of the German Romantic School would suffice to make her correspondence interesting to modern readers. Her letters are written in such a bright and charming style that if she had never spoken to a celebrated man they would still have been

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pleasant reading. But as it was her fortunate fate to live in the heyday of German literature, and to be well acquainted with the most important men of the time, she writes chiefly of persons and events that interest us all. She takes us behind the scenes of a familiar spectacle. We see poor Bürger dying in his garret, and Georg Forster with the best intentions mismanaging his own and other lives. We hear what Fichte's friends said when he was driven from Jena; we see him at Weimar drinking champagne with Caroline on the "first night" of "Wallenstein." Hegel, too, makes his appearance in her pages, not as the originator of a profound philosophical system, but rather as a young man agreeably attentive to ladies. As to Goethe and Schiller, information about them is perhaps plentiful enough from other sources. Still Caroline's letters are full of matter-of-fact allusions to their social and domestic affairs, and thereby help us to form a living picture of them. And as showing the bent of contemporary opinion, all she says of these great men is really valuable.

The interest taken in Caroline depends

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chiefly on her connection with celebrated persons, and especially on the part she played in encouraging the young Romantics. Her direct contributions to literature are insignificant. But she seems to have exercised a stimulating personal influence on the men around her, and to have possessed remarkable critical penetration. Moreover, the story of her life is peculiarly illustrative of the principles of the Romantic School and of the social atmosphere of her time.

The spirit of the age towards the end of the last century was revolutionary in Germany as well as in France. Men had outgrown the conditions by which they were surrounded. They suffered under laws that suited an earlier state of society. They resented the rigid separation of classes no longer kept separate by real differences in knowledge and refinement. The united and imperial Germany of to-day was hardly even dreamt of. Historians say that, divided and misruled as the country was, national pride and national honour were crushed and dead. Even educated men took no interest in the politics and public conduct of their country. Their attention was concentrated

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on literary and social matters, and the general discontent found a vent in attacking whatever was established, and in trying any modes of life and faith that were at variance with the accepted ones.

No one in Germany was more inclined by nature and encouraged by circumstances to share in the general ferment than Caroline. Her fate threw her into the company of the very men who were helping to carry on a war with conventional society and conventional literature, and her strongest affections and opinions weighed on their side of the fight. The deep and permanent influence she exercised on their lives and characters, the practical evidence she gave of her belief in their doctrines, the peculiar opportunity she had of making her life consistent with her theories, and the personal charm which all men who knew her were compelled to feel, are sufficient reasons, I hope, for offering a sketch of her to English readers.

Dorothea Caroline Albertine Michaelis was born in Göttingen on September 2, 1763. Her father, the Hofrath Michaelis, was one of those eminent men who, in the third quarter of the

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last century, made the young university of Göttingen the most celebrated seat of learning in Europe. An accomplished Hebrew scholar and Biblical critic, he gave as strong an impulse to theological research as his friend and colleague Heyne, "that man of rich genius and learning," did to the intelligent study of Greek and Latin literature; and, to his everlasting credit, he was one of the first to recognize the genius of young Lessing. But he was a middle-aged man before his children were born, and the notion of him gathered from Caroline's letters is of a scholar who has outlived his working powers, and, as he thinks, his reputation, and who nevertheless can find no satisfaction outside his library and lecture-room. Half a century separated his family from him, and became a barrier that the absorbed and worn-out scholar had no energy to overcome. He seems to have lived apart from his sons and daughters, knowing nothing of their wishes and opinions, and taking scanty notice of their individual development. Caroline reminds her brother Philip, as a reason for his patience and consideration, that their father must have felt the education of his family a

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burden, and she speaks of him as always locked within his study, poring over books, and brooding over the degeneration of his lecturing powers. Of her mother, Caroline speaks as rarely and as shortly as of her father. In the first letter preserved, written when she was fifteen, she mentions a preference shown by her mother for the other children. Whether this was fact or fancy it would be idle to conjecture, but it is quite certain that at no period of her life is there any trace of a strong and beneficent maternal influence. Her mother's home became a refuge for Caroline on more than one occasion, but at no crisis in her history is there any evidence that she sought her mother's counsel or depended on her sympathy. And yet Caroline was not wont to keep silence in her letters about the persons whose influence on her was strong; nor can there be any doubt that she was inclined to cling affectionately to her near relations. She writes with tender and solicitous attachment to her sister Lotte and to her brother Philip when she has left her old home. Her elder brother, Fritz, she loves during her girlhood with passionate devotion. Her letters are full of him and his

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excellent and manly qualities. After six years' absence in America he returns in time to be present at her marriage, and she whispers to her friend that no one, not even her lover, is quite so near and dear as he is.

Of course the professors occupied an important position in the society of the little university town; and their wives and daughters were more exposed than other women to whatever dangers may arise from constant and close association with a crowd of unripe young men. Bois said, in a letter written in 1770 from Göttingen, that girls who wished to escape gossiping tongues had to live in a retired fashion and to refrain from many innocent pleasures indulged in with impunity by their neighbours. The pretty daughters of one of the most distinguished professors in Göttingen were not likely to escape attention, for their father's house was naturally a gathering place not only for his colleagues, but for the younger teachers and the prominent students of the university. The bare facts that come out in Caroline's letters show that her girlhood was diversified by more than one tender episode; and indirectly one gathers that, without

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travelling far beyond her native town, her early experience assisted her to considerable knowledge of the world. She grew up in the society of the most learned men in Germany, and in the habit, moreover, of entertaining the eminent foreigners and the constant stream of well-known guests who present themselves at the doors of a man in her father's position.

Caroline's fifteenth birthday was overshadowed by the unkind behaviour of the celebrated naturalist, Blumenbach. The year before he had sent her a nosegay accompanied by an original quatrain. For some unknown reason his attentions to her ceased before the 2nd of September came round again, and on her birthday table of gifts and flowers there was nothing from him. At this early date Caroline laments the loss of her good name through her own imprudence. She gives no facts. And though, to judge from the respectable marriage she made a few years later, and by her intimate intercourse with people of unimpeachable reputation, these expressions of hers are out of all proportion to the truth, they throw a light on her mother's inability to guard the girl from the breath of scandal. One Linke, not

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otherwise famous, was Blumenbach's successor in her affections or her fancies. She confesses to her correspondent Luise that she would rather marry him than any one else; but at the same time, as she is only sixteen, she is ready to leave her happiness in the hands of Providence and to enjoy herself. Her philosophy was put to the test and triumphed. Linke had to yield to a rich uncle and renounce Caroline, who was soon in a position to inform Luise that time and absence were blotting out her memories of him. Indeed, she perceived about this period that what she took for love was merely glamour, and that love was a passion foreign to her nature. "I can live without love," she says, "but whoever deprives me of friendship deprives me of all that makes life sweet."

Luise Stieler, Caroline's faithful and life-long friend, was married in 1870 to the poet Gotter, and lived a quiet and uneventful life with him in Gotha. From Caroline's letters we learn that she was a loving and loyal soul, content in an atmosphere of domestic duty that would have stifled her restless friend. Through all the vicissitudes of Caroline's life Frau

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Gotter was prompt to help her with uncritical and active affection; and she was one of the very few people who throughout an intimate and enduring intercourse roused no feelings in Caroline but those of genuine friendship.

Therese Heyne, the daughter of the famous scholar, seems to have been Caroline's chief companion in Göttingen; but their friendship went through various stages, and was never a firm unruffled one. Of Luise Stieler, Caroline says nothing in her letters. For Therese, she is brimming over with blame and admiration. She is constantly describing and discussing her, and indulging in every feeling for her except indifference. Sometimes the two are inseparable companions, exchanging frequent letters, though they live in the same town, reading the same books, entertaining the same friends, and meeting constantly in society and at home. Suddenly a quarrel about nothing drives them asunder again, and Caroline's eyes are opened to her friend's shortcomings. "She talks incessantly, and is always witty; so she dazzles some and repels others. On the whole she is not liked, but by a few she is adored. She overflows with lofty principles, and is at bottom

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neither good-hearted nor sincere. Her manners are free and easy, but people forgive her this because it proceeds from her temperament." The first time she saw Fritz Michaelis she gave him a kiss unasked. Caroline admits that she never saw her friend do such a thing before, but she notes with satisfaction that after this Fritz thinks Therese a coquette and a *Freigeist*. Nevertheless, until Caroline's marriage, the two girls were constant companions.

Many girls of Caroline's age and standing were taking advantage of the more liberal views as to the education of women that were beginning to make themselves felt. Dorothea Schloezer took a doctor's degree, Philippine Gatterer set up as a German Sappho, and was painted by Tischbein as the Muse of poetry. But in those days a woman could not acquire a reputation for learning, or even for literary inclination, without incurring at the same time the terrible name of blue-stocking. Caroline is very severe on girls who thus unsex themselves, and says wisely that woman is only valuable for what she is as a woman. Certainly if the whole duty of woman is to please man, Caroline must always have fulfilled it with success.

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She was followed through life by a succession of enthusiastic friends and lovers; and even now that she has long been dead, the men who write of her write with that tender charity that so easily blinds itself to the faults of a charming woman. That she was regularly beautiful is never stated, and it is difficult to judge of her looks as a girl from the portrait of her in middle age. But from various sources one gathers many a suggestion of her bewitching appearance. She was tall and fair and blue-eyed, and the soft grace and brightness of her manner seem to have struck every one who saw her. Her sweet face and gentle ways softened her sallies, and persuaded men of her affection, sometimes too easily. "She was a strange and unique being," her third husband wrote at her death; "one is bound to love her wholly, or not at all."

In 1782 Caroline became engaged to George Böhmer, a young doctor settled in Clausthal, in the Hartz mountains. She does not seem to have been at all in love with Dr. Böhmer, though he, like so many other men, loved her with ardour and devotion. But she looks back (at the age of nineteen) to a stormy and ill-

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directed youth, and congratulates herself on being in a safe haven at last. No doubt the anxiety her parents must have felt to see their large family settled, influenced her to accept Dr. Böhmer's offer. She had, at any rate, said to Luise, shortly before her engagement, that she would prefer never to marry: a not uncommon conclusion for a young girl to arrive at, and depart from, in a short space of time. Her marriage, which took place on June 15, 1784, was celebrated by a round of breakfasts, suppers, balls, and picnics, given by her relatives and friends. The wedding-day she describes so prettily herself that it would be a pity not to quote her own words.

"It would be unnatural if a young wife did not begin with an account of her wedding-day. Mine was delightful enough. Böhmer breakfasted with me, and the morning hours passed gaily, and yet with quietness. There was no trepidation—only an intercourse of souls. My brother came. We were together till four, and when he left us he gave us his blessing with tears. . . . Lotte and Friederike wove the bridal wreath. . . . Then I had a talk with my father and dressed myself. . . . Meanwhile

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those dear Meiners sent me a note, with which were some garters they had embroidered themselves. Several of my friends wrote to me, and last of all I got a silhouette, painted on glass, of Lotte and Friederike, weaving my bridal wreath. When I was dressed I was a pretty bride. The room was charmingly decorated by my mother. Soon after four o'clock Böhmer arrived, and the guests, thirty-eight in number. Thank heaven there were no old uncles and aunts, so the company was of a more bearable type than is usual on such occasions. I stood there surrounded by my girl friends, and my most vivid thought was of what my condition would be if I did not love the man before me. My father, who was still far from well, led me to the clergyman, and I saw myself for life at Böhmer's side, and yet did not tremble. During the ceremony I did not cry. But after it was over, and Böhmer took me in his arms, with every expression of the deepest love, while parents, brothers, sisters, and friends greeted me with kind wishes as never a bride was greeted before, my brother being quite overwhelmed—then my heart melted and overflowed out of sheer happiness."

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The wedding was celebrated by the friends of the young couple a whole week after the ceremony had taken place; and the elaborate complimentary devices that Germans still delight in were not wanting. At one house, under pretence of the heat, the bride was led into the garden, and beheld there an illuminated motto: "Happy the man who has a virtuous wife: he will live twice as long." Another friend arrayed her son as Hymen, and taught him to strew flowers in Caroline's path, leading her thus to an arbour where there was a throne of moss and flowers, with high steps ascending to it, a canopy, and a triumphal arch. Concealed behind a bush were musicians, who sang an appropriate song, while the bride and bridegroom mounted the throne and sank in each other's arms before a crowd of sympathizing and tearful spectators!

In short, Caroline danced away from her old home, surrounded and petted by a troop of friends, and amidst extravagant tokens of general admiration and regret. The fact that she was married and on the threshold of a new life did not present itself to her with any reality until their travelling-carriage had driven bride

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and bridegroom far away from the family group that had accompanied them on the first stage of their journey, and well beyond the bewildering whirl of entertainments, business, and farewells.

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CLAUSTHAL.

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II.

CLAUSTHAL.

AROLINE'S new home was in Clausthal, a small mining town in the Hartz mountains. We get a glimpse of the place from Heine, who, forty years later, visited it on his way from Göttingen, and found the change from the pompous and artificial atmosphere of the university most refreshing. He visited the silver mines, went among the miners' cottages, and was full of admiration for the simple and picturesque lives these people lead, under the shadow of their pine-clad hills. Heine spent one night in Clausthal.

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Caroline lived there for four years, and grew from a girl into a woman. She never mentions the mines or the miners, but she found the society open to her unendurable. The pretty and elegant bride, fresh from the constant company of the most enlightened and eminent persons in Germany, saw herself settled for life as it seemed, beside neighbours who read little, and were much given to gossip and envy. No doubt the bright and charming ways of the town lady, her accomplishments, her liking for literature, even her distinguished friends and fashionable gowns, helped to excite provincial uneasiness and criticism. She was not large-hearted enough, and perhaps not old enough, to find in any circumstances some natures sympathetic with her own. Although she went to dinners and gave them, and shared in skating parties, marriage feasts, and other gaieties as they came, she does not seem to have made a single friend in Clausthal. It is only fair to her new neighbours to note that she confesses to her sister Lotte that they afforded her much amusement. Perhaps they noticed this fact. Her husband was a busy man, and though the first spring in her

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new home brought her a little daughter, she was still puzzled how to fill the long and lonely days. Her simple household duties were not enough to occupy her time, and never could have sufficed to fill her thoughts. She wrote long letters to Lotte Michaelis, whose love affairs seem to have been of a complicated nature, and she read as many books as she could persuade her sister and her friends to send her. She seldom finishes a letter without mentioning those she expects or would like to receive. English, French, and German novels, poems, travels, plays, history, philosophical criticism, and theological controversy; small books to hold as she lay on the sofa; heavy folios to open when she sat at a table; old English chronicles, Jacobi's "Spinoza," Herder's "Gott," Miss Burney's "Cecilia," "Don Carlos," the play by the rising young Suabian poet, who would do better if he could get rid of his Suabian dialect—all these and many more were sent to her through the carrier by her faithful friends in Göttingen. Indeed she writes sometimes as if, had Bradshaw been at hand in those days, she could have found it a pleasing occupation to study the time-tables.

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When her little girl, Auguste, was born Caroline was very ill, and would probably have died had it not been for her husband's tenderness and skill. Soon after her recovery her parents came to see her, and other friends from Göttingen, and a little later on she was well enough to take her baby with her and pay a first visit to her old home. She writes in high spirits at the thought of seeing her relatives and her former friends again. One friend has altered the date of a ball to ensure her presence at it, but that is not what she thinks of with most pleasure. She wants to be one of the family again, and not to be treated as a visitor. She will arrive on a Saturday, and her mother is not to put on the clean table linen, which is due on Sunday, a day earlier in her honour.

On her return to Clausthal in September, 1785, she had her house full of visitors until the winter was near at hand. "I do not know whether after so much bustle I like the silence," she writes to Lotte, when her guests had gone. "I must first get used to it again, and I should be downright unhappy if I could not—if I always needed society to make me cheerful. With grief I see the snow, the barrier between the world

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and me. . . . The trees are losing their leaves, the pines are getting black, the wind blows past my lonely room, the clouds float over us in a thousand shapes." As time went on her sense of isolation grew more oppressive. Dr. Böhmer was a plain, hard-working man, who probably thought his wife's literary tastes were a curious divergency from the ordinary feminine devotion to needlework and gossip. She never read aloud to him: at most she told him a little of what was interesting her. The ladies of Clausthal were not of her turn of mind. Unless she sat at her desk and wrote long letters to her sister and her friends she could give no expression to her thoughts. She made valiant efforts to keep out of her correspondence the discontent that had the upper hand; but indirectly the temper of her mind is plainly seen in it. When she discovers that Therese Heyne has been indiscreetly spreading abroad the fact that Caroline was disappointed with Clausthal, she hastily writes to assure Lotte that she has long ago got over these early impressions of her home. If at first she had felt inclined to brood over the disadvantages of a position that an inferior woman would have taken to more kindly, she

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soon perceived that her advantages were worthless if they did not assist her to make the best of things. She tells Lotte that she only finds Clausthal so dull and hateful because of its bad climate. She moves into rooms on a higher storey of her house that she may feel herself lifted above the Clausthal level, and there amongst her books, her letters, and her household cares she leads a bearable existence. For she was a notable housekeeper, in spite of the undeniable fact that all through her life she found some time on her hands for other interests and occupations than the purely domestic ones. She owns that life is made up of little things, and that when she asks people to dinner the "joint" is more important to her than anything in heaven or on earth. She speaks with understanding of matters appertaining to the comfort of a household, and is plainly an adept in that pleasant feminine art of introducing into any surroundings an air of grace and good order.

In the spring of 1787 her second daugher, Sophie Therese, was born. Very few letters are preserved from the following year, but there are enough to show that after this event Caroline's courage and cheerfulness were at the lowest

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ebb. That she was in delicate health she does not expressly say, but she gives up all pretence of being in good spirits. She speaks of spending Christmas over a novel, and of thinking between the chapters of the festivities Lotte is enjoying in Göttingen, and she describes Auguste's delight at her first Christmas-tree.

A few weeks later, on February 4, 1788, Dr. Böhmer died.

Unfortunately all the letters written at this time are missing, and in those of a later date nothing is said of Dr. Böhmer's illness, or of the first effects of his death on his widow. In Caroline's life her first husband played a part that is not without a touching aspect. It is not difficult to understand how she attracted the simple-minded country doctor, and naturally when she accepted him he looked forward to her finding satisfaction as other women do in a tranquil domestic *rôle*. It must have grieved him bitterly to perceive that her marriage was not a sufficient source of happiness to her; that her existence at his side was an unending struggle against restlessness and discontent; that in spite of husband and children her life was one of complete isolation. In a letter

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written during her widowhood to a friend, in whom she placed great confidence, she speaks in the plainest terms of her desolate and cramped condition in Clausthal. "You knew me," she says, "in a position that hemmed me in on all sides. I have been cruelly released from it, nevertheless I feel that it is a release. . . . I look back on that time with horror and trembling, and speak of it with morbid enjoyment as a captive does of his prison." Poor Dr. Böhmer!

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WIDOWHOOD.

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III.

WIDOWHOOD.

AFTER her husband's death Caroline spent some months in Clausthal, waiting there until her money matters should be settled. Her brother Fritz, a professor now at the university of Marburg, offered her a home with him. But after accepting it the difficulties of living comfortably with several children in bachelor quarters came into consideration. These appeared to be insurmountable for the present, so she gave up the plan, and, with her two daughters and her baby boy, born after his father's death, she went for the winter to her old home in Göttingen.

After four years' absence she naturally found

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a change of faces, but of course the most important change was in herself. She seems to have been shocked to find the superiority of Göttingen to Clausthal less striking than she had imagined. Her old acquaintances, seen for so long in the softening light of memory, seemed less attractive in the light of everyday intercourse. Her place at home was not defined, and, as a poor widow and the mother of three children, her position in society was obscure. Her letters suggest the difference her studious and secluded life in Clausthal had made to her. She had ripened in the best of company, with her children and her books. Her manner had gained in dignity; she was sobered by her sorrow and her responsibilities. Yet her new sense of freedom helped her to breathe with greater vigour. Sometimes she looked at her three babies and her widow's dress, and concluded that life held no surprises for her; but she had only to turn her eyes in a different direction to behold three young men already deeply susceptible to her charms. In this respect, at any rate, she found her old world unaltered. No sooner did she reappear in it than she saw lovers at her feet.

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Her most faithful and single-hearted admirer was August Wilhelm Schlegel, a young man of whom great things were prophesied. The name he bore was a well-known and honourable one, for both his father and his uncle had been staunch supporters of the revolution in poetry and dramatic criticism that was carried on with effect by Lessing and his followers. Wilhelm Schlegel, the young scholar who went to Göttingen in 1786 to study philology and classical literature, had made verses in the nursery, and had distinguished himself at the age of eighteen by a poem in hexameters on the history of Greek poetry. Before he had been at Göttingen a year he had written an essay on the geography of Homer that took a prize, and a little later he acquitted himself satisfactorily of a very laborious piece of work, the arrangement of the index to Professor Heyne's new edition of Virgil. He found time also to give German lessons to Englishmen and Frenchmen, and it is always said that he acquired, through his intimate intercourse with them, those polished and distinguished manners for which he was remarkable amongst his countrymen. But the most important connection he formed in Göttingen was with the poet Bürger.

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In 1786, when Wilhelm Schlegel first made his acquaintance, Bürger's second wife, the celebrated Molly, had not long been dead. The poet was poor, lonely, and inactive. Nothing could have been more pleasing to him than the advent of a disciple so stimulating and so full of promise. The two men became constant companions, and devoted their whole time to the study and to the production of poetry. They read Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists, and Percy's "Reliques," from which Bürger had adapted some of his most famous ballads, and they vied with each other in the production of sonnets perfect in form and diction. They began to translate the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and some short original poems by Wilhelm Schlegel found their way to the world about this time in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach*, which Bürger edited. The elder poet addressed a sonnet to his friend, in which he compared him to a young eagle who would soar above the clouds to the sun, and on whose head would rest a crown of laurels surpassing the one he wore himself. But although a very genuine and fervent attachment found expression in Wilhelm Schlegel's early poems,

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the warmth and sincerity of his feelings did not inspire his verses with corresponding qualities. They were elegantly turned, but cold, and not without an artificial ring.

Little is known about the early days of his acquaintance with Caroline, but it is certain that her influence over him was as strong as her coquetry could make it. She seems to have played with him in the time-honoured fashion of a cat with a mouse, now encouraging his fiery protestations, now turning from them with a smile; feeding the flame of his ambition one day with her sympathy and praise, and telling him the next with careless outspokenness that he would never be a great writer. In spite, however, of the damage done to his heart, it was not an illiberal education for the correct and scholarly young poet to love a woman so graceful, tender, and discerning. Her exuberant vitality and natural wit supplied a lack in his nature. Her influence over him was inflammatory, and he enjoyed the glow. It was not until she went to Marburg, in the spring of 1790, that they began to write to each other and to quarrel. Schlegel appears to have shown more fire than tact in his share of the correspon-

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dence, so that Caroline found it necessary to put a check on his aspirations. She resented the indiscretion he showed in proclaiming the fact of their correspondence in Göttingen, and she tells her sister that she has written to him in a tone that he will not be anxious to publish. As to the marriage between them, arranged by the tongues of the gossips, Caroline assures her sister that the report is worthy of its source. "Schlegel and I! I laugh as I write. No, that is certain—we shall never make a match of it."

But the truth is that when Caroline left Göttingen to keep house for her brother Fritz in Marburg she was no longer fancy free. Amongst all the men who cherished the warmest feelings for her throughout her life, I gather that she loved two. The first, the love of her young womanhood, was a man called Tatter, tutor to the Hanoverian princes, who were studying in Göttingen, and the travelling companion of the Duke of Sussex. He seems to have been of a strong and quiet nature, a man to whom Caroline, with her conflicting impulses and tempestuous moods, would willingly have clung. And there is no

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doubt that had he followed his inclinations he would have given her the support she needed. As long as she was in Göttingen he was certainly under her spell. Caroline says that he was ready to give up his life for her, although he left her dearest wishes unfulfilled. It was not want of love that restrained him, but prudential considerations—perhaps, amongst others, the spectacle of Bürger's matrimonial misadventures. Once, when they were lamenting their friend's miserable third marriage, he asked Caroline whether men must always be thus unmanned by love. That is the question of a man to whom women are a puzzle and a mystery, and who stands aloof from the woman he loves for fear she should develop the destructive qualities of a sphinx at closer quarters. Tatter may have resisted his desire to marry Caroline from worldly reasons, his position at Court depending partly on his bachelor freedom; but there is no doubt that the dread of making an irretrievable mistake was one of the motives that determined his inaction.

The little that is known of the relations between Caroline and Tatter is gathered from

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her letters to F. L. W. Meyer, whose acquaintance she had made during the first visit she paid to Göttingen after her marriage with Dr. Böhmer. At that time Meyer was the librarian of the University Library, and an intimate friend of the Heynes. Therese Heyne, it is said, was one of the many women who felt his strong personal charm. His own affections were in a constant state of division, and he never married. When he was young his friends expected him to make a great literary reputation, but he is only known to-day as the unsuccessful biographer of Schröder, the actor. When Caroline arrived in Göttingen, after her husband's death, he was on the point of starting for a protracted European tour. There is a curious little note to him from Tatter expressing surprise that Meyer should have stood aloof from such a charming lady. None of the letters explain the circumstance, and the correspondence that follows between Caroline and Meyer shows that whether or not they avoided each other in public, they had formed one of those friendships that were the fashion of the day. Every man of feeling at that time was in search of his affinity. Lads at the

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universities wept on each other's bosoms, and discussed their innermost experiences. Older men hoped that the tide of revolution would sweep over Germany, and carry away with it all difficulties in the way of universal brotherhood. Men and women formed intimacies which led neither to love nor marriage, and yet were not bereft of sentiment. It was a union of this kind that existed for many years between Caroline and F. L. W. Meyer. Her letters to him contain elaborate descriptions of her states of mind as well as allusions to the outward changes in her life. Of course Caroline's general tone is not entirely pleasing to a modern taste. She is eternally discussing herself and her feelings: and her confessions do not ring true. They sometimes sound unpleasantly like the morbid enjoyment certain feminine natures find in self-dissection, and even in self-abasement, as long as one attractive man is their sole auditor. But it is only fair to her to remember that at the end of the eighteenth century such personal discussions were almost a literary fashion, and free from the stamp of vulgarity that the least suspicion of sentiment and insincerity fixes on them now.

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At first Caroline was much happier at Marburg than she had been at Göttingen. The people there were less pretentious and more kindly; not so cultivated, but not so arrogant as at the more famous university. "People love me, though I make no effort to gain their love," she writes. "They would adore me if I would respond. . . . My room is fragrant with pinks, provided by my worshippers of the lower classes—not counts and esquires—even the people cannot help serving me, and innkeepers, chemists, and woodcutters bring gifts to my Grace. I have a laurel that I am nursing for a poet—say that to Schlegel—and a heavenly mignonette—a *souvenir*—say that to Tatter. Pinks are my favourite flowers."

In December, 1789, her younger daughter Therese died of the measles. Her baby boy had died in Göttingen when only a few months old. The poor mother was ill for some time after this fresh shock, and it was probably in search of strength and refreshment that she paid a visit in the spring to her old friend, Therese Heyne, who, in 1785, had married Georg Forster, the celebrated naturalist and

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traveller. They had settled in Wilna at first, but were now living in Mainz. Caroline found Therese altered and yet her old self, more intolerant than ever, narrow, and unspeakably kind-hearted. The Forsters did their best to persuade Caroline to live altogether in Mainz, but although difficulties had arisen in her life at Marburg she stayed there two years longer. A love affair of which she did not approve had brought about a serious breach between her brother and herself; and the only manner in which she could keep the peace was by separating herself from him and his friends. As long as she was in his house she lived entirely in her own room, which had a lovely view of a romantic valley; but even the good view and the company of her little girl were not enough to make up for such an unsociable existence. About this time Caroline's long letters to Meyer became melancholy in tone and morbidly reflective. She often expresses a determination to make herself happy in defiance of gods and men, but the very tone of her phrases betrays her failure. "Some people seem destined to hope nothing, and fear all from fate. . . . I am alone, without help or protection; my friends

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ask me for my advice: it does not occur to them to give theirs to me, a woman left quite to herself. . . . There are hours in which my existence, with its many contradictions, brings me a deep and haunting pain—any pressing occupation or passing pleasure stills it. That is a contradiction too, but we must thank the gods that we are not consistent."

In the summer of 1791 the discomfort at Marburg reached a climax, and she felt forced to give up her home there as quickly as possible. She went straight to Göttingen and spent some weeks in her parents' house. After that the Gotters welcomed her with open arms, and conspired, moreover, to keep her in Gotha. A friend of theirs, a man of high standing, the General-superintendent Löffler, made an offer of marriage to "the coquettish young widow" (as she calls herself), which she, however, refused. The Gotters besought and reasoned and scolded in vain; even their descriptions of her lover's disappointment did not move her. To Meyer she confessed that for three days she was undecided what to do. Should she live in worldly comfort and in thraldom, or should she remain free even at the cost of comfort? Her

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indolence pointed one way, "the innermost flame of her soul" the other. So she followed the "innermost flame" and dismissed her highly respectable suitor. At that time she was seeing Tatter constantly in Göttingen, and no doubt fervently wishing that he would ask her to extinguish the flame that lighted the path of freedom.

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IV.

MAINZ.

IN 1791 Professor Michaelis died, and Caroline spent the autumn and winter of that year with her mother and sisters. It was not until February, 1792, that she settled in Mainz, in a home of her own, with no one but Auguste and the Forsters to keep her company.

Georg Forster had been two years and a half in Mainz, where he filled the position of librarian in the University library, eking out his income by literary work. The society of the town consisted almost entirely of a corrupt aristocracy and an inert and uneducated bour-

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geoisie, all Roman Catholics. But there was a sprinkling of literary and scientific men who were glad to gather around Therese Forster's tea-table and join in the political talk that in those days swamped every other topic. Georg Forster, who had been a good deal in England and with Englishmen, was one of Germany's earliest modern political theorists, and was among the few who perceived the significance of the French Revolution to the whole of Europe and to future generations. He was a brilliant, lovable, well-meaning man, as unpractical as a child, and as imprudent. His opportunities never fulfilled their promise; his noblest intentions and opinions only brought him grief; he worked beyond his strength to pay his expenses, and yet he never managed to regulate these by his income rather than by his desires. To have been his wife must have been a martyrdom. Therese was a sensible, economical woman, but all her efforts could not make up for her husband's frequent journeys and costly purchases. And on this most important subject of money an unnatural and disastrous reticence existed between husband and wife, which of course helped the growth of misunderstanding. Pro-

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bably they could not have told how or why they first began to drift away from each other; but it is certain that soon after Caroline came to Mainz she observed signs of discord in the Forsters' household.

Therese had unfortunately found a friend at hand to whom it was easier to confide her difficulties than to her harassed and irritable husband. This friend was Ferdinand Huber, secretary to the Saxon Legation, a pale and sickly man, French on the mother's side. He had lived much in Dresden, and was a friend of Körner and of Körner's sister-in-law, Dora Stock, to whom indeed he was said to be engaged. When the report of his intimacy with Forster's wife was bruited about, the friendship with Körner naturally came to an end; and the general belief that Caroline had encouraged the intrigue did not recommend her to Schiller, who was Körner's warm friend. It is due to Therese to say that according to her husband's moral code their marriage vows were not binding. The arbitrary slackening of civil and religious ties was a revolutionary war-cry that Georg Forster echoed with enthusiasm. And though his wife's disaffection was a grief and a

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misfortune to him, he remained on friendly terms with Huber to the day of his death.

Nevertheless, however firmly a husband is convinced that his wife is free to make a second choice when he no longer satisfies her, the home in which such views are acted upon is sure to be a disturbed one. It was on a tottering household that Caroline depended for society when she went to Mainz. She began by enjoying her life there. During the spring she took long drives and walks with the Forsters, and boated with them by moonlight on the Rhine. She made one of the company around Therese's tea-table, and, listening to the political chit-chat there, became a red-hot democrat and revolutionary dreamer. Her bright ways and quick sympathies made her a welcome guest in a society consisting for the greater part of men. But though the Forsters received her with the most generous hospitality, she was necessarily a great deal in her own rooms with Auguste. The mother and daughter were always close and dear companions. "My duty to my children has been a check on me since their father died," she wrote to Meyer. "If this tie was broken I should follow quite

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different ways. God grant it may not break." At seven years old Auguste seems to have been an innocent, simple-hearted, merry little soul. "Every one is fond of her," wrote her mother; "Therese often seems to prefer her to her own child, who is sickly and peevish. She calls Forster father, and he treats her like his child. With them she sees something of family life.... For her sake I do not regret that I came here." By the time, however, that Caroline had spent four or five months in Mainz she began to feel discontented with the situation. Her friendship with Therese, that on its renewal had promised to run smoothly, was already disturbed again. She could not be a constant visitor at the Forsters without having her eyes opened to the unhappy state of things there; and it is easy to believe that she did not help to improve matters. It was not in her nature to make peace. She took Forster's side at once: for though fully alive to the weakness of his character, she cherished a warm affection for him. Therese's friends said afterwards that Caroline was largely responsible for the breach between Forster and his wife, but it does not seem likely that her influence on their fortunes

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was really important either for good or ill. When once Therese's patience with her husband was exhausted, and her love for him worn out, when once she had allowed Huber to take upon himself a husband's duties of provision and companionship, it cannot have greatly signified whether or not Caroline encouraged Forster's imprudence and discontent.

Caroline's friends outside Mainz were scattered and beyond her reach. Her sister Lotte was married, the old home in Göttingen broken up, and Frau Michaelis travelling with Luise, the youngest daughter, in North Germany. Meyer, still her chief correspondent, had given up his travels, and was settled in Berlin, doing less than was expected of him. A. W. Schlegel was in Amsterdam, acting as tutor to the son of a rich banker, and addressing his sonnets to a certain Sophie there. Caroline still corresponded with him, and could have summoned him to Mainz and away from Sophie with a word. But she did not say it. She still cherished other hopes. Late one evening in August, 1792, she sat down to write to Meyer, from whom she had just received a letter. She was in a highly excited and restless mood, full

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of an irresistible desire to speak of what was in her mind. She had confided in Auguste, but the little girl thought the whole matter unimportant. The Duke of Sussex was making a round of the German baths. Tatter, his travelling companion, had set out to join him at Schwalbach, which is in the neighbourhood of Mainz. Would he, "the man who was so dear to her," see her and make up for his recent coldness and reticence? Caroline speaks of her love for him with convincing fervour and sincerity. It has been so much to her for so long. It has helped to raise her above vexations and to preserve her from melancholy. The sun shining in at her window, the wind beating against the panes, has been enough to stir in her a wave of ardent feeling. But if he disappoints her, the joy of life will turn to ashes. She is so tortured by her love for him and her uncertainty, that her endurance is well-nigh at an end. She returns to her old refrain, that in one way or another happy she will be; and if he fails her, she sees no better way than to tear herself irrevocably from him and seek for consolation elsewhere. This letter throws a stronger light on her subsequent conduct

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than anything she said later in defence of herself. She loved Tatter passionately and, as it turned out, hopelessly. The only refuge she saw from despair was defiance. This coming disappointment was, however, kept out of sight for a time by Tatter's advent. In the beginning of October she writes that he has just started with the prince for Italy, and that his visit has made her very happy.

Meanwhile trouble of another kind was approaching. The town was in daily expectation of being attacked by a detachment of the French revolutionary army under General Custine. The frontier of Germany at that time consisted of numerous minute principalities, each one governed separately, and as incapable of independent military effort as they were unripe for united action. Mainz, a town of incalculable strategic importance, was practically defenceless. As if the Millennium rather than Napoleon were near at hand, the bulwarks were turned into gardens, the trenches were planted with creepers. The Prince-Bishop, a man with neither piety nor courage, had squandered the public money on his private vices, and indulged to the utmost in the corrupt

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and arrogant luxury that made his class, the last representatives of a worn-out system, detested and contemptible. He had every reason to dread the invaders, for he was known to be a bitter enemy of the Revolutionists and the intimate ally of the French emigrants at Coblenz, who, by their insolent swagger and ostentatious expenditure of money, assisted more than any direct means to raise friends for the revolutionists amongst the German middle and lower classes. Directly the news came to Mainz that the French had taken Speyer, the Prince-Bishop fled from the town under cover of the darkness, taking the precaution first of erasing his arms from his carriage. His flight was a signal for a general exodus of the nobility and clergy. For three days and nights the road from Mainz to Coblenz was like a fair. An unbroken stream of carriages, waggons, carts, and coaches carried away the panic-stricken gentlefolks and their portable property. Monks and nuns left their sanctuaries; all business was at a stand-still; only two doctors were left in the town. The dastardly behaviour of their leaders drained away what little courage there had been

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in the citizens of Mainz. Like the generals left to defend them, they sat down helplessly and awaited the French. When the enemy arrived General Custine requested the garrison and the town to surrender, and after a little negotiation they did so without striking a blow. "Are we to desert the fortress or defend it?" the governor had asked the generals. "Desert it," they had promptly answered. So the only man who had come with a plan of defence was obliged to put it in his pocket and watch the French march into the town.

General Custine took up quarters in the Prince-Bishop's palace, and those citizens who secretly harboured revolutionary opinions and wished to see Mainz on the map of the French Republic, gathered around him. Georg Forster and his associates were prominent members of this party, and Caroline in her letters shows how favourably disposed they were towards the invaders. They established a Jacobin Club in imitation of the Parisian one, they planted trees of liberty, they wore the tri-coloured cockade, they could hardly await the day when the whole left bank of the Rhine should be handed over to the French Republic. By acci-

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dent at first, and afterwards with gradually greater inclination, Georg Forster became deeply involved in the doings of the democratic party. Custine attempted an attack on the University funds, and it fell to Forster, the librarian and an accomplished French scholar, to defend them. Day by day occasions then arose on which his intervention and his services as an interpreter were made useful; and in this way he came into constant contact with the French and their adherents. His more prudent friends watched with concern his implication in the doings of the revolutionists, and besought him to leave Mainz while there was yet time. But he was not the man to desert his post because it was becoming dangerous. It was a most difficult matter to persuade him that his wife and children might separate from him without political dishonour. However, the arguments of Huber and of Thomas Brand, a young Englishman staying with the Forsters, at last prevailed; and in December, 1792, Therese and her two children were conveyed safely to Strasburg. When Therese bid her husband good-bye in Mainz it was for ever. She saw him once

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afterwards at a French country inn. But by that time her separation from him was definite and irrevocable. She returned to Germany with Huber and her children, and Forster went back to Paris to die in poor and lonely circumstances, and with the miserable conviction that in his own country his name was reviled as the name of a traitor; for after Therese's departure from Mainz he took steps from which there was no withdrawal, and for which no patriotic German could find pardon. He became president of the Jacobin Club, and published a decree declaring the whole district from Landau to Bingen free from allegiance to its German rulers. On March 24, 1793, he left Mainz in the company of Adam Lux (Charlotte Corday's defender). Both men went as representatives of the Rhenish Republic, which was to be incorporated with the French one, but which, in fact, never attained the dignity of even a temporary existence.

Caroline, in spite of the expected siege, had not been driven from Mainz. She stayed on, doing all she could to cheer and encourage Forster, acting, as she said, in the capacity of "moral sick nurse." Amongst the accusations after-

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wards brought against her, one was that she strove to complete the breach between Forster and Therese, in the hope of ultimately marrying Forster herself. Moreover a French paper described her later as Forster's "amie." There does not seem to have been any truth in these charges, beyond what rests on her inclination at all times to inflame existing animosity rather than to extinguish it. She considered that Therese's desertion of her husband was in every way a false step; and no one who reads an account of Forster's last days, and of the loneliness, poverty, and sense of failure under which he languished, can help feeling that Caroline's hot indignation was justified. As long as he remained in Mainz she took constant and tender care of him; and, at the time, Therese felt and expressed her gratitude. Moreover, there is incontrovertible evidence that Forster did not monopolize Caroline's society and affections during the French occupation of Mainz. In December, when they were living in daily expectation of a siege, she wrote for the last time to Tatter for counsel. If he had told her to leave Mainz, she would have instantly obeyed him. But such advice

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at such a crisis would have implied an interest in her fate, and a right to direct her movements, that a judicious man, unless he was prepared for further responsibility, might well refuse to acknowledge. Caroline was so deeply compromised by her intimacy with the revolutionary party, that the disadvantages of a union with her were no longer doubtful. In answer to her appeal Tatter professed to be "in despair that he could do nothing to help her." "Then," Caroline says, "my patience gave way, my heart broke free; and, in my position, aimless and planless as I was, I thought I could do nothing better than console my friend in his sadness, and otherwise amuse myself." The friend she alludes to was Georg Forster. The amusement she sought was found in the society of a Frenchman whose name is not publicly known. Of this most disastrous and discreditable episode it is fortunately impossible to say much. Only indirect allusions to it are published in her letters; but it is impossible to doubt the evidence gleaned from other sources. And to write the story of her life without any mention of an event of such incalculable importance, the consequences

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of which plunged her into the depths of misery and humiliation, would be to leave her subsequent position almost unexplained. For her connection with political offenders would not account for the desolate circumstances in which she was destined to pass the next few years.

In March, 1793, when the united German army issued from its winter quarters and began serious operations against Mainz, Caroline made up her mind to take refuge with the Gotters in Gotha. She was accompanied by Auguste, and by two friends who had been living with her. After various difficulties they arrived in Frankfurt, under the guidance of a man, who delivered them to the Government directly he discovered their names. They were detained in Frankfurt for three days, a temporary inconvenience that did not open Caroline's eyes to her real position. But when the three days were at an end a guard was set over them, and before Caroline had time to communicate with her friends she was imprisoned with her daughter and her travelling companions in the fortress of Königstein, near Mainz. Here she stayed until midsummer, one of a herd of political prisoners arrested on

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suspicion, and kept in confinement without trial. She was considered a hostage for Forster, with whose name her own was persistently and scandalously coupled. Her health became seriously injured by the insanitary conditions and the deprivations of her life in prison, and her straitened means could not supply the lavish bribes exacted by the officials for extra comforts. She had to live in a room occupied by seven other people, and to busy herself from hour to hour with the clothes of herself and her child to prevent their becoming infested with vermin. In the damp and pestilential garden of the fortress, in which the prisoners were allowed to walk, the thunder of the besieging cannon reached them. Only a small hill hid from them the scene of war.

Caroline was allowed to communicate with her friends, but the news she got was not inspiriting. Such exaggerated calumnies, such undeserved reproaches were heaped on her name, that her actual errors sank into insignificance beside them. Her appeals to her friends for rescue from the squalor and humiliation of the prison were piteous. Both Gotter and Wilhelm Schlegel applied to every likely and

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unlikely person on her behalf, amongst others to Wilhelm von Humboldt; but their efforts were of no avail. Her mother, who, poor soul! was at the same time mourning the recent death of her daughter Charlotte, did what she could to cover Caroline's disgrace. She wrote to Wilhelm Schlegel and to Tatter, and assured them of her daughter's political innocence; and she applied to every one whose intervention was likely to be of service. It was suggested at one time that as Caroline was considered Forster's hostage, he might release her by delivering himself; but she would not hear of such a proposal being made to him. At last the representations of her friends procured an amelioration of her condition. Towards the end of May she was allowed to move to Kronenberg, a little town near Frankfurt, where, though still under surveillance, she had a room to herself, good air, and quiet surroundings. Here she lay in bed for three weeks, too ill to move. Directly she was better she grew impatient for unconditional liberty and for complete retirement. The treatment she had undergone had not left her more patriotic. "Brigandage has been prac-

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tised on us, not formalities," she writes to Gotter; "and you are wrong in accusing one nation only of robbery and violence. At least you should not say so to me who have seen a hundred and sixty prisoners plundered and beaten nearly to death by the Germans." Goethe, who watched the siege of Mainz from the Prussian camp, mentions, like Caroline, the animosity felt by all classes for the unsuccessful republicans of Mainz. The crowd of roughs outside the gates of the town permitted Frenchmen to depart in peace, but the German Red who fell into their hands hardly escaped with his life.

For Caroline, however, a saviour had unexpectedly arrived. Her younger brother, Dr. Philip Michaelis, hurried from Italy on her account, and, after visiting her in Kronenberg, decided to send in a statement of her case to the King of Prussia. Partly through the new light it shed on her behaviour, partly in recognition of the brother's humane and gallant conduct, the king granted her an unconditional pardon. On the 13th of July, 1793, more than three months after her arrest in Frankfurt, Caroline wrote to the Gotters to thank them for their exertions on her

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behalf, and to tell them that she was free, but that for a time she must live in hiding. Even to break her journey at Gotha would be to court a dangerous publicity. From all that part of Germany in which she felt at home she was now an outcast; for, though the Prussian king had released her from prison, the Rhenish dukes and princelings would not suffer her in their territories. Her brother Philip, who, to show his gratitude, had volunteered his services as army surgeon, was obliged to go to his work; her mother and sister do not seem to have been anxious to receive her; her recent friends were like herself, poor and in exile; her old ones were held off by the scandalous stories in circulation about her life in Mainz. Never was any woman in greater need of a knight to espouse her cause; and a knight was forthcoming, whose chivalry, tenderness, and courage were greater perhaps than her deserts. "When I was forsaken by every one," she writes to Meyer; "when I could not even have found a place to die in, I put my trust in a man whom I had thrust from me, given up, offended; to whom, from the very nature of my confidence, I could offer no reward —and he did not disappoint me."

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V.

IN HIDING.

THE man of whom Caroline spoke in these grateful terms was, of course, Wilhelm Schlegel. In the spring of 1793, and during the preceding winter, he had repeatedly implored her to leave Mainz, and to free herself from all connection with the revolutionists, but at that time she regarded herself as his mentor, and was not inclined to follow his instructions. She corresponded with him, and treated him with exasperating caprice, now coaxing him to come and see her, and next day perhaps recalling her invitation and the encouragement it im-

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plied, because her inclination had altered. His brother Friedrich was privy to all that passed between them, and though from Caroline's letters he recognized the uncommon quality of her mind, her poetical fancy, and her "delicacy" of feeling, he strongly advised his brother to give her up. Wilhelm did on one occasion assert himself and speak his mind strongly. For a time his ardour seemed to cool, the lady in Amsterdam acting perhaps as a counter-attraction. But when he heard that Caroline was in prison he did his utmost to procure her release. And in July, when she was alone in Frankfurt, ill, in deep disgrace, and hardly knowing where to lay her head, he went to her and acted for her with admirable tenderness and discretion. He travelled with her to Leipzig, and placed her under his brother's guardianship, at first in the house of a bookseller in the town, and afterwards, when difficulties arose with the officials, in a little country place close to Leipzig, but beyond the Saxon boundary. "You see what a friend Wilhelm has been to me," Caroline wrote to Friedrich Schlegel a few months later; "all that I could ever give him he has willingly,

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unselfishly, and disinterestedly repaid by his gracious help. If it is too much to judge of a man by his behaviour to a woman, it seems to me at any rate that Wilhelm, in what he has been to me, has comprehended everything that is at once childlike, unprejudiced, noble, and lovable."

It is impossible to imagine any one apparently more unsuitable for the duties thrust upon him than the moody, thriftless, and dissipated young man who was constituted Caroline's guardian in Leipzig. He was five years younger than Wilhelm, and nine years younger than Caroline. His parents had wished him to be a merchant, and at a very early age he had actually sat for some time on a three-legged stool. It was impossible, however, for him to remain there. He gave up his office work without precisely knowing what to put his hand to next; and it was at the suggestion of his parents that he went to Göttingen to study jurisprudence. He was there for some time with his brother, who took great pains to further his development, and, in fact, awoke in him the passion for art and poetry that shaped his career. Wilhelm tried moreover to draw his

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brother into Göttingen society, but he failed to divert him from his misanthropical and melancholy mood. In 1791 both brothers left Göttingen, and after spending a short time at their home in Hanover, Wilhelm went to Holland, and Friedrich to the university of Leipzig. Friedrich did no solid work there, although in an incredibly short time he acquired a knowledge of Greek and Latin, and a slight acquaintance with every art and science taught in the lecture halls. In a wholesale and desultory fashion he read the greatest writers on every subject and of every age. He loved knowledge, but was incapable of steady effort. He studied widely and intelligently, but without aim or great result. The fact is that, like many of his contemporaries, he was afflicted by the hypochondria, the scepticism, and the want of moral fibre that were common symptoms in his day; and the character of his work suffered from the morbid condition of his mind. His discontent, bred partly of influences affecting every thoughtful person in Germany, and partly of his own exacting and unsteady disposition, resulted in temporary demoralization. When once a man announces it as his opinion that

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what his fellow-creatures call good or bad is indistinguishable and equally to be recommended for practice, it is not difficult to prophesy which complexion his own actions will wear. With an exasperating assumption of superiority and fitness for "the infinite," Friedrich Schlegel gave himself up to very commonplace sins indeed. He was idle, quarrelsome, and extravagant while he was at Leipzig. "Everything is dissatisfying, empty, and detestable," he wrote; "it often seems to me that I care little whether I am good or bad, happy or unhappy. I have noticed what impression I make on others. People think me interesting, and go out of my way. Where I go good-humour vanishes; my presence is oppressive. It is considered best to look at me from a distance, as if I were a dangerous curiosity." In short, he was a ready-made Romantic hero.

At the request of his brother, for whom, to do him justice, he cherished a staunch and deep affection, he undertook to stand by Caroline in her troubles. The first impression she made on him was extraordinary. He could find no words to describe it. He had not known that such a woman existed. He had been willing

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to help her for his brother's sake, but before he had known her three days he was ready, on his own account, to lay down his life for her. He feels himself in contact with a larger mind than his own, and a superior intellect, and he is charmed by her simplicity and her divine love of truth. Her critical acumen delights and astonishes him; her reading aloud is admirable. He soon has to take strong repressive measures in order to remain faithful to his brother. It was very difficult, he found, to see her frequently, and refrain from loving her. But he made a valiant struggle to preserve his loyalty to Wilhelm, and, aided by Caroline's indifference (she, poor soul, being occupied with other matters than the inflammable feelings of a boy nine years her junior), he succeeded. It is an actual fact that the excellent results of their intimacy on his character and work can hardly be overestimated. In circumstances that would have deprived most women of all beneficial influence, she rescued Friedrich from a life of debauchery and extravagance that had brought him to the verge of suicide; and perceiving with her customary penetration his great promise, she roused him

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to do work that gave him at a bound a name and a place in literature. "My intercourse with Caroline has been of the greatest value to me," he writes; "I am a better man through her."

In the light of these assurances Caroline's reiterated assertions that she is a "good" woman are more comprehensible than they would otherwise be to a person holding our present social views. She had the strongest belief in the excellence of her motives, in the good grain of her own nature; and as the marvellous personal influence she exercised over a succession of eminent men was, on the whole, a favourable one, it seems likely that her self-esteem was justified by fact. Compared with the history of many women of her society and time, her adventures are not remarkable. The most superficial acquaintance with the social history of German towns immediately after the death of Frederick the Great, shows that in certain classes of society an extraordinary slackening of moral customs had succeeded a long period of military despotism. Berlin at this date has been likened to the Venusberg. When Jean Paul arrived in Weimar, and became aware

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of the fashionable manners there, he cried, "Here be women indeed! and husbands count for nothing!"

It was some years after his introduction to Caroline that Friedrich Schlegel described her in his notorious novel, "Lucinde." But there is no doubt that the portrait, which is a very striking one, borrowed its chief features from the period of his companionship with her in Leipzig. It is immediately preceded in the story by an account of the hero's state of mind that exactly tallies with what is known of Friedrich's condition before Wilhelm Schlegel put Caroline in his charge. A life of dissipation and a habit of morbid and immature speculation had reduced him "to despise the world and all things, and to be proud of doing so."

"This disease," Julius, the hero, continues, "as well as all preceding ones, was cured and dispelled by the first glimpse of a woman who was unique." He goes on to explain that his former attachments, though many in number, had been fleeting and superficial in character, but that a strange and unfamiliar sensation convinced him that this one was destined to last

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for ever. He no sooner became aware, however, that his happiness depended on reciprocation, than he remembered that his intimate friend had prior claims on her affection. He renounced hope and happiness, thrust his love out of sight, and assumed a severe and fraternal manner towards her that was perfectly successful. She suspected nothing. "She possessed in a high degree the nobility and refinement that are characteristics of certain feminine natures; every divine and every mischievous trait was hers, but the whole was exquisite, cultured, and womanly. Each separate characteristic was developed and expressed as independently and sturdily as if it existed by itself, and yet the rich, bold combination of such dissimilar qualities did not form a jarring whole, for it was animated by a single soul and by a vivid breath of harmony and love. In the selfsame hour she could jest and mimic with the finish and spirit of a trained *comédienne*, and read aloud a stately poem with the bewitching dignity of an artless song. One day she would shine and flutter in society, the next she was all enthusiasm, the next, again, she would help with word and deed, serious, modest, and

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kind as a tender mother. An insignificant episode acquired, through her manner of telling it, the charm of a fairy tale. She invested everything with wit and feeling; she appreciated everything; everything was ennobled by the touch of her hand, or by the sweet words on her lips. Nothing good and great was too sacred or too common to awake her ardent sympathy. She caught every allusion, and answered every hint of a question. It was impossible to discourse to her; all talk became an exchange of ideas, and, as she listened and answered, an ever-varying music of intelligent glances and sweet expressions played over her face. Even in her letters one could hear and see her conversing; her inmost nature shone out in them as in her conversation. Any one who knew only this aspect of her might have thought her merely charming, that she would make a bewitching actress, that her winged words only lacked rhyme and rhythm to become tender poetry. And yet this very woman showed on every great occasion astonishing strength and courage, and judged mankind in accordance with her own heroic standard."

It will be seen that Friedrich Schlegel was

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not afraid of using expressions that simple-minded persons will perhaps find a little affected and obscure. "To read a stately poem with the bewitching dignity of an artless song" sounds very much like nonsense in German as well as in English; to say that each characteristic was developed as strongly as if it existed by itself is unmeaning information; and to call the play of expression on a woman's face "an ever-varying music" is wordy rather than truthful. But on the whole the description of Caroline (called Juliane in the story) is written with such sincerity and enthusiasm that it is an interesting record of her influence on Friedrich Schlegel, and, in spite of its shortcomings, it is a memorable and attractive portrait of her.

"His adoration of his noble friend," continues the author of "Lucinde," "became a fixed centre for his mind and the foundation of a new world. Here all his doubts vanished; in this real goodness he felt the value of life, and began to see the omnipotence of will. . . . He lived only in the future and in the hope of one day completing an immortal work as a monument to"—his own virtue and his own worth!

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Friedrich Schlegel's dream of an "immortal work" to be left behind him changed in the course of his life as often as his inclinations. Haym says of him that every essay he wrote for a journal became in his imagination the programme of a vast work, while every projected work shrank in reality to the size of an essay. In January, 1794, he went to Dresden, his head teeming with plans, to execute any one of which would have occupied his life. He actually made his literary *début* with some fragmentary essays on Greek poetry and Greek life, and an announcement of his intention to complement Winckelmann's researches in Greek art by equally exhaustive and accurate work in Greek literature. These essays, mere crumbs from the splendid banquet he promised his contemporaries, excited immediate attention. They showed considerable classical knowledge as well as certain valuable literary qualities, a faculty of apt expression and of vivid characterization. One of the best was a glorification of the position and character of Greek women as contrasted with modern ones. It was a hymn of praise rather than a criticism, but it possessed the great merit of considering Greek art

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and poetry in the light of Greek morality and national life. It bore witness to the writer's perception, unusual in those unpolitical times, of the dependence of literary tone on the public tone amidst which a literature has its birth. At all events, although their audacity excited disapproval, the publication of these articles made an important difference in Friedrich Schlegel's position and prospects. His knowledge and abilities met with recognition, his knack of expressing with courage and point the ideas and opinions just coming to the surface in many minds, marked him out at once as a representative man. Caroline found him an aimless, melancholy, and dissipated lad. When he left her to go to Dresden he was advancing with quick and sure steps towards his ultimate position as leader of a literary revolution. "My development I owe to myself," he wrote to her three years later; "but that I have developed at all is partly due to you." By which he probably means to say that, though she had no share in the form and matter of his work, her influence on him had been a stimulating one. Indirectly she had even suggested the spirit of one of his classical studies; for the ideal of feminine

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strength and independence he glorifies under the name of Diotima bears a resemblance to his conception of his "incomparable friend." Again, it was through her recommendation that he read Condorcet, and wrote an account of him for a philosophical review; while his generous "Charakteristik" of Georg Forster in the "Lyceum" probably owed its truth and warmth to Caroline's loving defence of her old friend.

On emerging from the obscurity of her Leipzig home, Caroline was made to feel in the bitterest fashion that she had forfeited the good opinion of her neighbours. Her connection with the Revolutionists and with a Frenchman, and, above all, the share she was supposed to have had in destroying Georg Forster's marriage, were actions that brought the utmost obloquy on her name. In February, 1794, she accepted an invitation from the Gotters, friends who remained faithful to her throughout all her troubles; but her first reception in Gotha was a most painful one. With the exception of her host and hostess, and two other old friends, no one would receive her or meet her; the very mention of her name was avoided, and the

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Gotters found their house shunned as long as she was in it. She describes her situation with her customary frankness to Meyer, who had visited her in Leipzig, and of whose friendship she still felt assured. "Political opinion, which is as pronounced here as elsewhere, serves as a pretext for turning unmistakably from me. They consider me a depraved creature. . . . My real misdeeds serve to awaken belief in others that I never could have committed. Do you know of no hut for me? I am an outcast." But the acrimony and the exaggeration of the charges brought against her roused her spirit of resistance. At one time, indeed, she thought of turning her back on Gotha, and hiding in Berlin; this, however, she could not do without Meyer's help, and he turned a deaf ear to her appeals. She was not to find a faithful friend in him. So she made up her mind to settle in Gotha, and to live down the scandal that sullied her name. It can only be considered fortunate that the child born in Leipzig had died there, and that, on her reappearance in the world, Auguste was once more her sole companion. She stayed in Gotha for more than a year, writing frequently to Meyer, meanwhile

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explaining her plans, confessing to her humiliations, and asking his aid and counsel. In her later letters her tone towards him is not without a foretaste of the coming breach between them. She makes a parade of her intimacy with the Schlegels, and when Meyer replies evasively to her hints that she would like to go to Berlin she revenges herself by consulting him as to the comparative advantages of Holland and Dresden. "Il m'a toujours paru que vous avés une dent contre les Schlegels," she writes, bursting suddenly into French. "Au moins je ne puis leur nier de l'influence sur mon sort, car si je ne vais pas à Dresden j'irai en Hollande—et ceci c'est une chose si bien resolue qu'il y auroit lieu à delibérer si on ne devrait pas prendre d'abord ce parti qui leveroit tout embarras et couperoit touts les noeuds de ma situation embrouillée."

As things turned out, however, she did not go either to Dresden or to Holland, neither to Friedrich nor to Wilhelm Schlegel. In August her mother and her sister Luise visited Caroline in Gotha, and took her for a few days to Göttingen. The authorities, directly her presence in the town was known, issued a decree to forbid it now and in future. In considera-

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tion of the high respect felt for her family, the order was conveyed to her relatives privately, but none the less peremptorily. However, she remained there long enough to see most of her old friends, and to effect a reconciliation with Dr. Böhmer's family. She returned to Gotha in better spirits, and with increased self-respect. And it was now arranged definitely that she should live with her mother in Braunschweig—a plan so much more suitable and natural than any other, that one wonders it should not have been considered from the beginning of her misfortunes.

The April following this visit she went to Braunschweig with Auguste. She enjoyed setting her new home in order, and she found that society in Braunschweig was not as relentlessly closed to her as it had been in Gotha. Eschenburg, whose translation of Shakespeare was as yet the best in Germany, treated her with great kindness, and other people of influence received her with civility for her mother's sake.

At the end of July, Wilhelm Schlegel, having given up his tutorship in Amsterdam, came to see Caroline and to discuss their future plans.

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Unfortunately, their letters to each other have not been preserved, but there is no doubt that he wished as ardently as ever to pass his life by her side. He had every reason to be in good spirits about his chances of success. Though for several years he had lived out of Germany, his connection with the leading literary men in his country had been strengthened by the acknowledged excellence of the poems and articles he wrote in exile. Schiller had the highest opinion of his promise and exerted himself to secure the young man as a contributor to his journal, *Die Horen*, and to a miscellaneous annual, *Der Musenalmanach*. It is true that he had no chance of a professorship, that his scanty savings had all gone to pay Friedrich's debts, and that Caroline's income was only sufficient to support her child and herself. Nevertheless Wilhelm Schlegel felt no doubt of finding remunerative work.

The real obstacles in the way of an establishment with Caroline were connected with her political position. For they had decided to live side by side, but not to marry, according to their revolutionary and romantic principles. And it seemed doubtful whether the notorious Frau

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Böhmer would be suffered in any town offering Wilhelm convenient work and congenial society. As Wilhelm's wife, however, Caroline's position would be unquestionable, and Friedrich lost no chance of urging on his brother a step he considered so necessary to their happiness. He was still in Dresden, and still in eager and frequent correspondence with Caroline when "the divine schoolmaster," as she had nicknamed Wilhelm, came from Holland. Friedrich did not advise their emigration to America—a scheme at one time seriously discussed. He would have wished them to go to Rome, where he might join them and study art in Wilhelm's company. However, Wilhelm's career was determined by the encouragement he received from Schiller to settle in Jena and devote himself to literary work there. His marriage with Caroline now became necessary, and he urged her to consent to it. "Whether you will trust me you must consider together, thou and thy mother," he wrote to Auguste; "thou, at any rate, wilt not be against me, dear Gustel." On July 1, 1796, he and Caroline were married in the Church of St. Catherine at Braunschweig. "He thinks

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differently of my friends the republicans, and he is not a bit of an aristocrat now," Caroline had written shortly before. "Ah! I will still cure him of his want of passion, and then his education will be complete."

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VI.

JENA.

WILHELM SCHLEGEL chose wisely when he determined to settle in Jena. In the first place Schiller lived there, and Goethe a few miles off, at Weimar. To be in their near neighbourhood, and on friendly terms with them, was of inestimable value to a young writer. Goethe's influence in literature and in society was at its height, and Schiller, as editor of an ambitious journal, professor of literature, and popular poet, was in a position to give a man substantial help. Then the university of Jena was at this time the headquarters of philosophical teaching, and in particular of the

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Kantian doctrines, which were spreading like a new religion amongst the youth of Germany. The chair of philosophy was filled when Schlegel went to Jena by Fichte, whose system, ill understood, was destined to become the gospel of the Romantic School. Like most educated Germans of his time, Wilhelm Schlegel took an interest in philosophy, and he had even tried to write a series of letters on poetry and rhythm from a philosophical point of view. But, fortunately for his success in life, he discovered at an early stage of his career that he could do better work by keeping close to literature and criticism. Bürger's prophecy, that his disciple was to be a great poet, had come to nothing. The ballads he contributed to the *Musenalmanach* were but colourless and elegant imitations of Schiller. His poetry never was anything more than scholarly and ephemeral. It was on different ground that he attained to the first rank.

While he was still in Göttingen he had written an essay on Dante that was a remarkable piece of work for so young a man. In it he laid down principles of criticism which to-day seem commonplace and obvious, but which a hundred years ago were only beginning

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to make their way. The extravagances of the German Romantic School are perhaps more generally remembered than the solid and valuable work accomplished by its leaders. Their melancholy and absurd incompetence to deal with real life is more easily seen and described than their unquestionable influence on the literature, the philosophy, and the religion of the present century. When Wilhelm Schlegel said that it was necessary for a just comprehension of Dante to enter into the spirit of the thirteenth century, and into the nature of the poet's surroundings, he was only applying Herder's principles to the case in point. He was not the first man in Germany to insist on sympathetic criticism. Lessing and Herder had gone before him. But the Schlegels were among the first to profit consistently by the new teaching, and to study with understanding and appreciation the poetry of foreign countries and of bygone times. It is often said that a leading characteristic of the Romantic School was its exaltation of the Middle Ages; its affected and silly apotheosis of mediæval art, literature, and morals. Of course every movement is hampered by followers, who exaggerate its tendencies

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and bring discredit on its aims. Heine says that Franz Horn, one of the later Romantic critics, found unutterable pathos and meaning in the nursery rhyme, "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home," just as some of our contemporaries and countrymen have discovered (Mr. Du Maurier tells us) subtle beauties in "Little Bo-Peep." But these follies are bubbles on the stream: a breath of healthy ridicule explodes them; and the main current, setting towards a wider sympathy and a greater individual freedom, flows on undisturbed. Wilhelm Schlegel certainly helped to rouse a general interest in old and foreign literatures, and in doing so he was helping on the development of his countrymen.

His greatest gift to the nation was, no doubt, his translation of Shakespeare. Hitherto the small number of Germans who read Shakespeare at all read an inferior translation by Eschenburg. To the nation at large Shakespeare was nothing but a barbarous name: only a small literary clique appreciated him. The study of the English drama and of old English poetry had, however, been gradually growing in importance amongst the men of the

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new school. Lessing had preached the greatness of Shakespeare; Bürger had attempted to translate him; Goethe had yielded to his spell while he was young, and now in middle age had interwoven in his greatest novel his elaborate criticism of "Hamlet," which is almost as well known as the tragedy itself. But no one had yet come forward with the will and the power to prepare an accurate and poetical translation of the English poet. Gifts of a high and unusual kind were a condition of success. A great creative genius was not likely to possess either the inclination or the power; yet no one incapable of poetical expression and poetical insight could have approached the task. Sympathy, discrimination, patience, wide and varied knowledge, and an extraordinary grasp of language were some of the qualities necessary to a work of such difficulty and magnitude. A little later on, when the Romantics began to formulate their theories of poetry and criticism, a great deal was said about the translator's office. That a translator is never to interpolate beauties of his own, or even to smooth away defects in the original; that he is to preserve the characteristic measure of a poem, and to be literal

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without being clumsy—these are canons that have proved their soundness and become common property. A schoolgirl trying to translate Heine's lyrics bears them in mind to-day. Less than a hundred years ago Goethe produced an acting version of "Romeo and Juliet" that began, like a comic opera, with a chorus of Capulet's vassals; and Schiller, in his translation of "Macbeth," added to the witches' chorus in one place, changed the story of their adventures in another, and rendered Shakespeare's prose in German blank verse. The first announcement Wilhelm Schlegel made of his intention was in an article in *Die Horen* on "Shakespeare and Wilhelm Meister." He maintained here, that in spite of the efforts made by Wieland, Lessing, Herder, Eschenburg, and Schroeder, the actor, a poetical translation of Shakespeare was still wanted, to ensure his popularity in Germany. In the following year he published in the same journal an essay on "Romeo and Juliet," so remarkable that it can only be compared with the analysis of "Hamlet" in Wilhelm Meister. In the preface to his collected writings Schlegel mentions that he was helped in this essay by a clever feminine

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friend. That Caroline assisted her husband in his literary work is well known; but before the publication of her letters it was not clear how large a claim she had to this particular criticism. Her suggestions, which contain the gist of Schlegel's remarks, are contained in two letters written to her husband when he was staying in Berlin. They are too long to quote here and too noteworthy to be altogether omitted, but the reader who cares to see them will find them in the Appendix.

The first play Wilhelm Schlegel translated was "Romeo and Juliet;" the next was "The Midsummer Night's Dream." In four years no less than sixteen plays appeared, each one showing greater skill than the last. It is satisfactory to remember that in recognition of such valuable work the title of Professor was conferred on the translator in 1798, when he was only thirty-one years old. He lived to see his version adopted on every stage in Germany, and, according to his expectation, instrumental in making Shakespeare generally and intimately known. Whatever praise and admiration his biographers may feel inclined to accord him has, however, been forestalled and outdone in the sonnet he wrote and

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addressed to himself. In it he celebrates his learning and his industry, he describes himself as a pattern sonneteer and a mirror of form, and he reminds the world that he is the first German who has wrestled with the spirits of Shakespeare and of Dante.

The Schlegels were cordially received by Schiller and his wife and by the literary society of Jena. Caroline's discreditable past seems to have been overlooked, and however much she professed to rise above conventional opinion, it must have been an unspeakable relief to so proud and sensitive a woman to find herself reinstated in the consideration of the world. She made herself the indispensable companion of her husband, copying his manuscripts for him, often writing the reviews of books by which he earned his living, and helping him indirectly with her acute and delicate literary judgment. Their house became a favourite gathering-place, and every one who was admitted there bore witness to the intelligence and grace and kindness of the mistress. She seems to have been blessed with that beautiful social tact rare in all countries, and certainly rare in Germany; the delicate power of assisting the persons near

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her to reach their highest level of talk and conduct, to contribute their best towards the general enjoyment. The evening assemblies at her house, informal and simply constituted as they were, became a feature of society in Jena. Every one of distinction in the town met there, and young men and strangers considered it a privilege to be invited. Caroline was well supported by her husband, who liked elegant surroundings and a habit of successful and polished hospitality. At their receptions young authors were sometimes allowed an opportunity of reading an unpublished play or poem to an audience of judges, and many a masterpiece was read or acted in Caroline's drawing-room as a variation from the eager and bright discussions that in her presence grew out of desultory talk.

Caroline, however, as was her wont, made enemies as well as friends. At first there are frequent allusions in her letters to friendly intercourse with Schiller and his wife. But these soon cease, and the nickname given her by Schiller, Dame Lucifer, best explains the nature of her reputation with them. The breach between Schiller and the Schlegels, which grew wider as time went on, and for which Caroline was to

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some extent responsible, is closely connected with the fortunes and the development of the Romantic School. Their extraordinary and persistent disparagement of him is partly to be accounted for by facts that have no connection with their literary opinions. Caroline had never admired Schiller, and she encouraged to the utmost Wilhelm Schlegel's prejudice against him, a prejudice excited in the beginning by Schiller's contemptuous criticism of Bürger, and kept alive by his philosophical and critical writings. Both Wilhelm and Caroline strove against Friedrich's youthful enthusiasm for Schiller, which at one time was very strong. The combination of poetry and philosophy that Wilhelm Schlegel did not appreciate appealed irresistibly to Friedrich; and so did the revolutionary spirit of Die Raüber and Don Carlos. He felt that he was of the poet's kin. But Wilhelm and Caroline constantly held Schiller up to ridicule and compared him to his disadvantage with Goethe. Caroline read "Iphigenie" to Friedrich and encouraged his growing inclination for Greek poetry and his "mania for the objective" in art. For he, the Romantic, the mystic, the Roman Catholic,

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began his literary career with loud talk of the "objective" and by an undiscriminating preference for everything Greek. His early admiration of Schiller died quite away during this classical fever, and he was imprudent and arrogant enough to clothe his new opinions, gathered for the most part from Wilhelm and Caroline, in the most cutting language at his command, and to put the whole into print. It was most important to him, as a young writer, with no means of subsistence but his pen, to stand well with Schiller. He was anxious to contribute to *Die Horen*, and to that end sent in an article on "Cæsar and Alexander" for Schiller's approval. After much suspense on his part this was returned to him. His offensive criticism of Schiller's poetry, offensive alike in its praise or blame, had come out in Reichhardt's "Deutschland," and Schiller, deeply incensed at the young man's impertinence, refused to countenance him or even to further assist his brother. He wrote to Wilhelm saying that he had been glad hitherto to give him material support, but that Friedrich Schlegel had rendered their connection with each other embarrassing: it would be better, therefore, to break it off altogether.

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The fact was neither Wilhelm nor his wife escaped suspicion. Indeed popular report in Jena said that Dame Lucifer had written the review. Caroline enclosed a note to Schiller in her husband's explanatory letter, both containing assurances of profound esteem and gratitude as well as a denial of any participation in Friedrich's folly—a denial that was literally but not morally true. They had advised Friedrich not to publish his article, but some of the most objectionable sentiments in it—a suggestion, for instance, that one of Schiller's poems would be improved by being read backwards was actually quoted from Wilhelm. Schiller answered Caroline by saying that he felt certain she was too sensible to meddle in such matters—a questionable compliment to the Muse of a literary school. The terms of their intercourse never recovered a friendly character, although Wilhelm Schlegel continued for a year or two to have business dealings with Schiller. Friedrich, for his part, tried, both through Körner's intervention and by means of a more flattering criticism, to atone for his offence. But he never succeeded. And soon afterwards Schiller retaliated in a manner that put an end to any hope or even

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wish the Schlegels may have cherished for a reconciliation.

It has always been the legitimate business of heroes to slay injurious giants. Goethe and Schiller had meditated for a long time the punishment of the rogues and dunces who possessed the ear of the public. It is well known that the idea of castigating their enemies in a series of epigrams occurred to Goethe as he was reading Martial; that he consulted with Schiller, that soon after several hundred Xenien, the work of both poets, were published in the *Musenalmanach* for 1796. Carlyle says they created a commotion in the intellectual world that had not been equalled since the Reformation. A literary crusade can never, one thinks, rouse such wide and general interest in all classes and in all minds as a religious one. Still, wherever hard hitting is going on, the crowd will rush to see. And the Xenien were very hard hitting indeed. No one who was on the wrong side escaped exposure and ridicule. The Rationalists of Berlin, those glib and shallow devotees of common sense, the melodramatic play-writers, Kotzebue and Iffland, the religious fanatics, the milk-and-water poets, the presumptuous and

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empty-headed newspaper writers, all came under the lash. And as most of the epigrams were aimed at living men, it may be imagined how many open enemies Goethe and Schiller made by their exploit. Friedrich Schlegel found his pretensions held up to scorn in a whole row of couplets. His criticisms, his idolatry of Greece, his cheap estimation of modern poetry, were mocked at, his scholarship questioned, and a little patience, modesty, and reverence recommended to him. Even Caroline is said by some to have been pointed at in one of the epigrams :

An Madame B—— und ihre Schwestern :
Jetzt noch bist du Sibylle, bald wirst du Parze, doch fürcht ich,
Hört ihr alle zuletzt gräszlich als Furien auf.

But Caroline at any rate never suspected this. She quotes the couplet herself in a letter to Luise Gotter, and mentions the Madame Brun to whom it refers. Moreover, in 1796 Caroline was no longer Madame Böhmer, and was apparently still on cordial terms with Schiller ; and, if *Schwestern* was meant literally, she had only one sister living at the time.

In the autumn of 1796 Friedrich Schlegel

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stayed with his brother some months, and on every one who met him he made a favourable impression. He was a man of great personal attraction. Steffens, the Norwegian Romantic, a constant visitor at the Schlegels', describes Friedrich's regularly beautiful features, his slim build, and his quiet manner. Schleiermacher describes him in much the same way, and adds that he was pale and dark-haired, and, in his dress, careless, but distinguished. All his friends seem to have been struck with the fire and intelligence of his expression, his witty talk, and the interesting character of his ideas. Auguste soon became the devoted friend and pupil of her charming young uncle, who was not too old to play with her, and was yet, through his superior age and wisdom, invested with some sort of authority. In Germany at that time a child of eleven was not so completely in pinafores as a little English girl is to-day. Novalis, the apostle of the Romantic School, and Friedrich's intimate friend, betrothed himself to a girl only twelve years old, with the consent of both her parents; and Mignon cannot have been much older when she broke her childish heart for Wilhelm

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Meister. Friedrich, however, kept clear of sentiment in his intimacy with Auguste. He taught her Greek, took her to the theatre, sent her books and music, and bantered her on her juvenile shortcomings. The fourteen volumes of his published works contain nothing so engaging as his letters to this fortunate little girl. The wit, the whimsical humour, the affectionate disposition that endeared him to his friends, touch all he says to her. If he could have written for the public with the same light hand and tender grace, he would have won a wider popularity.

In the spring of 1797 Wilhelm and Caroline contemplated a visit to Dresden, and it was proposed that while they were away from home Auguste should stay with the Gotters. But Gotter, who had been ailing all the winter, died on March 18th, leaving his work unfinished and in great confusion. It was only a friend so energetic and so capable as Caroline who could have persuaded the widow to look through his manuscripts, and have helped her afterwards to dispose of them. She went herself to Schiller with a request that he would take one play for *Die Horen;* Iffland, the Berlin

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theatre manager, accepted another, which was found in a fragmentary condition and revised by Caroline. Her every letter to Luise Gotter contains a pressing invitation, and expressions of regret that she cannot go to Gotha. Wilhelm Schlegel, she explains, is so dependent on her, not only for comfort and companionship, but for actual assistance, that she could not leave him for more than a day. In the spring she went to Dresden with him and with Auguste. On their return they expected Frau Gotter and her daughter Cecilia, but the visit for some reason was postponed until the following January. Cecilia Gotter remained in Jena all that summer, working at painting, which she wished to study as a profession. Caroline stayed quietly at home, helping her husband by writing reviews, as well as by acting as his amanuensis, and carrying on a lively correspondence with Friedrich Schlegel, who was living in Berlin with his new comrade, Schleiermacher, and receiving many new impressions to convey to his "incomparable friend."

An eminent writer on the German Romantic School says that the men belonging to it knew

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as little how to value the splendid minds of the women it was their good fortune to live beside as they knew how to use the great ideas they inherited. He says that Caroline Schlegel shows in her life and letters an interest in larger questions than purely literary ones, and that it was the influence of her circumscribed surroundings that diverted her attention from political struggles and world-wide issues towards the squabbles and the achievements of a few men of letters. On the other hand, Wilhelm Schlegel said of his wife that she possessed every quality necessary to a brilliant writer; and her German biographers bestow very cordial praise on her for making no attempt to reach distinction in a masculine sphere. Whether in different circumstances she would have developed a strong taste for politics, or would have actually written the novels she sketched and dreamed of, it seems to me profitless to inquire. No one can either make or contradict such statements in any terms that carry conviction. The fact that is made plain in her letters is that she took kindly to the atmosphere of Jena, and flourished in it until she was disturbed by storms of her own

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raising. She had been born and bred within the sound of literary discussion, and had pined for it in Clausthal, when she was beyond its reach. She shows at all times a keen interest in the events of the literary world, as well as an interest in the personal concerns of her friends and enemies. Schiller's visitors, the Xenienkampf, Goethe's opinion of Gotter's play, Agnes von Lilier, an anonymous novel by Schiller's sister ascribed by the Schlegels to Goethe, private theatricals, the coming and going of friends, Auguste's education, Luise Gotter's plans—these are the matters that fill her bright and chatty letters, and help to give a picture of her environment. The general impression left is undoubtedly that she was cheerful and well satisfied. It was much better for her to spend the few hours she could snatch from housekeeping and literary work in a lively interchange of visits, and a light-hearted correspondence, than in spinning out an analysis of her feelings for the edification of F. L. W. Meyer. And I even think that she was doing more admirable work in Jena when she was helping W. Schlegel to translate Shakespeare, and thereby to make him a familiar inmate of

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German homes, than she ever did in Mainz in the company of politicians.

In the spring of 1798 Caroline and Auguste again went to Dresden, while Wilhelm Schlegel visited his brother in Berlin. The brothers were on the eve of a great undertaking. They were about to begin a journal that should be an organ for the publication of their peculiar views. In Berlin Wilhelm Schlegel made the acquaintance of several men who became members of the little band of his contributors; and most of these, the earliest leaders and promoters of the literary revolution known as the "Romantic" movement, met at Dresden in the summer months of 1798. In the picture galleries there they spent most of their days together in prolonged discussions of all those literary and artistic questions they afterwards wrote about, and in the study of those great works of art that to some of them were a miraculous realization of ideal beauty. Several of the young men who assembled there, and followed Wilhelm Schlegel from one treasure to the other with an exquisite sense of new enjoyment, had been longing all their lives for some such satisfaction of their emotional and

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artistic faculties. But, coming from small country towns, and having always been too poor to travel, they had never before seen great pictures, or listened to fine music finely rendered. Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel arrived in July. Hardenburg was there, dreamy, lovable, and ardent, not yet known to the world as Novalis; Fichte and Gries were of the party, and Schelling, the young philosopher who was to lecture in Jena next winter. All these and others were constantly together in the galleries, in the theatres, and out of doors. Some of the writings by which they are best known were first suggested and considered amidst these favourable conditions. A clearer understanding of their common aims was a necessary result of such constant interchange of ideas. Henceforth the Romantics formed a school; they were represented by a journal, and were in constant communication with each other. Even the outside indifferent world began to be aware that half a dozen young men were contemplating a revolution in art and life so aggressive and popular that it would force every one to participation or resistance.

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"THE ATHENÆUM."

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VII.

"*THE ATHENÆUM.*"

WHEN Friedrich Schlegel went to Berlin in 1797 he found society there in an extraordinary ferment. The military despotism of Friedrich Wilhelm, and of his great son, had slackened in the feeble hands of his successor, and with the relaxation of military discipline there had been a general abandonment of all restraint. A state of licence and corruption ensued, as glaring and as widely spread as the excesses that disgraced the English court of Charles II.; and the only check on the cynical and riotous manners of Berlin was the ineffective one

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attempted by the officials of the Illumination. The great leaders of the Illumination were all dead, and a young generation was beginning to say that the vitality of their doctrines had died with them. The final result of their predominance in Germany was to supply every respectable citizen with a ready-made code of morals by which all his actions from birth to death were regulated. The movement that had begun with the perception that honest men are bound to think for themselves, ended in an attempt to mould all men on one pattern. At its birth it had shone, in the speech and actions of the most candid and powerful thinkers in France and Germany, it had helped to sweep away the gloom of bigotry and superstition, it had established honourable and serene doctrines; but as time went on its influence became a narrowing one, its prescriptions grew rigid and suffocating. It appealed most strongly to that large section of society nowadays called Philistines, named by Friedrich Schlegel the Harmonious Blockheads. And their most powerful representative, the man who clung to the dry husks of Rationalism long after the grain had been consumed, was

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Nicolai, author, publisher, and moralist. In the correspondences and journalistic literature of the time his name is a constantly recurring one. Everybody who shared in the progressive spirit of the century seems to have seen in him a deadly enemy. He plays the part of a popinjay at a German fair, the wooden bird perched aloft at which every man of prowess fires a shot. A whole volley had been directed against him by Goethe and Schiller in the Xenienkampf. And yet in his youth he had been an ardent reformer, the friend of Lessing and of Moses Mendelssohn, the patron and protector of many a young man of letters. But he did not move on with the times, and in his old age he was bewildered and indignant at the inrush of new leaders and new combatants, whose manner of warfare he could not understand. The young generations, brought up in fetters, allowed no freedom of thought or deed, and accustomed to a dull and colourless existence, were beginning to rise in an irregular but determined fashion. The Philistines saw themselves confronted by a turbulent society, seceders from the Rationalist camp, who only needed coherence and expression to become

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formidable antagonists. Restless and imaginative minds had long since begun to feel the confines of Rationalism unendurable. Precepts that their fathers considered the bulwarks of a healthy and flourishing public tone began to totter under their persistent attacks. Yet the more refined amongst them could not fly to dissipation for a refuge. Coarse pleasures were as far removed from the emotional and beautiful life they desired as the matter-of-fact surroundings from which they sought relief. And it was Friedrich Schlegel's quick perception of the common need, together with his knack of expressing it with courage and point, that marked him out at once as a representative man.

The nucleus of a new party, the right *milieu* for his work, he found in a little society whose main bond of union was the admiration felt by its members for Goethe's poetry. It was not a common taste in Berlin. Kotzebue was incomparably more amusing to most people; and the morality of his melodramas, in which the outcasts rather than the heroes of society played touching parts, was considered exquisite. The liking for unhealthy literature, that always

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follows a period of artistic repression, was flourishing side by side with the demand for empty moral stories and undigested science: just as riotous living and exaggerated sentiment prospered in full view of the most respectable and prosaic people in the town. Nearly a quarter of a century had gone by since the time of "storm and stress" that had hailed Goethe's first play and first novel. The boys and girls who had been stirred by Götz and Werther were middle-aged men and women; middle-aged, but not without memories and sympathies that helped them to understand the younger generation, the inheritors of their enthusiasm and their discontent. And the genius of Goethe was a power to unite as swift and unfailing as a common tongue is in a foreign land. In the little society of which Friedrich Schlegel became a member, it united persons who at that time were as widely separated by religious and class prejudices as Christian and Jew, or as noble and serf. Certain beautiful and distinguished Jewish ladies, celebrated in the history of German literature, Henrietta Herz, Rahel Levin, Dorothea Mendelssohn, and others, made the study of Goethe their

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religion, and welcomed men of any profession or position who were inclined to join in his worship. Friedrich Schlegel was introduced to these ladies by Schleiermacher, a young Protestant divine, who had made their acquaintance through a certain German nobleman, his pupil. They have left nothing behind them but letters and traditions, and yet they were in the centre of the movement. Like Caroline, they were content to exercise an influence, to take an indefinite and intangible share in the work of their friends. Their value depended on their delicate perception, their personal charm, their eager acceptance of new ideas. They made a stimulating and supporting audience.

Directly Schleiermacher made the acquaintance of Friedrich Schlegel he conceived a friendship for him that rapidly ripened into affectionate intimacy. And yet no two men having tastes and aims in common could have been less alike. Schleiermacher was a clear, deliberate, and subtle thinker, averse from authorship, accustomed to a life of solitude and reflection, quiet in his manner, circumscribed in his acquirements. The impression made upon him by the contrasted character

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of Friedrich Schlegel is best described in his own words. "He is a young man of twenty-five years," wrote Schleiermacher to his sister, "of such wide knowledge that it is incomprehensible how any one so young can possibly know so much; and his originality is far in advance of anything even here, where talent and originality abound. . . . As to his intelligence, it is so superior to mine that I can only speak of it with reverence. His manner is marked by a simplicity, a frankness, a childlike youthfulness, the union of which with his other qualities is, perhaps, more remarkable than anything else." After an autumn and winter of close companionship Friedrich went to live in the same rooms with his friend, and Schleiermacher could not have described the advent of a bride with a warmer glow. Nevertheless, he had already made some discoveries that clashed with his first impressions. Friedrich's endurance and solid knowledge looked more doubtful at closer quarters; and a letter from Wilhelm Schlegel about his brother, that a few months back would have seemed harsh and incompetent, coincided now with opinions Schleiermacher had arrived at by himself.

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Wilhelm thought "something might yet be made of the young man" if Schleiermacher would take him in hand. He was not wanting in ability, but his way of going to work was curious. If left to himself he would burrow deeper and deeper like a mole, and no one could say that he would not come to life again at the Antipodes. He was more successful with marginal notes to letters than with the letters themselves, with fragments than with essays, with self-coined words than with fragments.

Wilhelm Schlegel's letter, although it is couched in magisterial terms, expresses the truth. Nevertheless, this young man's fragments were immediately to become the only formulated doctrines of a new school—a school which counted among its members many men and women of great promise, and which struck out a path for itself, following neither the older generation, the "harmonious blockheads," nor the two great national poets, Goethe and Schiller.

When Friedrich Schlegel recognized that after breaking with Schiller there was no opening for him in Jena, he went to see Reichhardt, the editor of a Radical paper called

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Deutschland. The politics of this journal had become so obnoxious to the Government that he was about to withdraw it and to begin a fresh one called *Der Lyceum der schönen Künste*, and it was as sub-editor of this that Friedrich Schlegel went to Berlin. He wrote two admirable articles for it, one the "Characteristic of Georg Forster," already alluded to; the other, an essay on Lessing, remarkable both for its penetration and its audacity. In it he contested the claims made by Nicolai and the Philistines to count Lessing on their side; he laughed at their efforts to cover their poverty of spirit with that great name. In his analysis of Lessing's work and life he said some memorable and some foolish things, as was his way. His eloquent sketch of Lessing's personal character deserves to be quoted as long as Lessing's qualities are remembered and admired; but when he invests Lessing with certain romantic qualities peculiar to himself and his friends he shows a lack of understanding. However, the essay helped to make it quite clear on which side he meant to fight, and it raised his literary reputation, which for so young a man was already considerable. With Reichhardt he soon

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quarrelled on some unimportant subject. He had never liked him, and for some years he had been anxious to embark on a venture which should give his genius and his brother's scholarship full play. "A journal not only edited but entirely written by us two, without any other regular contributors; a journal in which neither form nor matter should be predetermined, except that very unpopular subjects and huge works should be excluded. Only think what an infinite advantage to be perfectly free in our choice of what we will do. I hope that Caroline will be inspired by the scheme, and take more part in it than she has hitherto done." Thus he writes to his brother full of expectation and ambition. They will accept masterpieces of criticism and polemic, and anything remarkable for sublime impudence (*erhabene Frechheit*). His two friends, Hardenberg and Schleiermacher, have promised contributions, the former on "Wilhelm Meister," the latter on "The Immorality of all Morality," a title after Friedrich Schlegel's heart. It was not without protest that he consented to call the new journal *The Athenæum*. *Schlegelæum* would have fitted it better, he said, for his wish

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was to make it specially and peculiarly the mouthpiece of his brother and himself. For months before the appearance of the journal his letters to Caroline are full of it; he begs her advice, her criticisms, her contributions. If she is too indolent to write she is to counsel and sympathize, and to spur on Wilhelm. Her natural style, he says, oracularly, is rhapsody. Fragments are peculiar to him, and clear, dignified massiveness to Wilhelm. If ever Caroline writes a novel it had better be in letters; she is an expert in the art of writing letters and reviews. He asks for something about Jean Paul's "Siebenkäs," and Tieck's "William Lovell," and he talks of extracting a philosophical rhapsody from her letters. At any rate the journal must have an *esprit de Caroline*. The first number of *The Athenæum* appeared soon after Easter in 1798. In a preface the brothers explained their aims, and promised that "the truth as it appears to us shall never, out of consideration for others, be expressed in a half-hearted way." This first number, however, was not so aggressive as had been generally expected, owing, no doubt, to the fact that Friedrich was behindhand with his contribu-

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tions. The most remarkable article in it was a criticism of Lafontaine's *Nouvelles*, signed by Wilhelm Schlegel, but really written for the most part by Caroline. Her judgment had always been penetrating, and her faculty of expression unusual. And of course her surroundings had generally been of a kind to foster and refine her natural ability. To the second number of *The Athenæum* she sent a review of Müller's "Briefe eines jungen Gelehrten." "I do not know the writer," the author said, "but he is my most confidential friend. No one has ever said in a review or discovered from my writings so much that is true of my position and character."

The second number of *The Athenæum* created a sensation. The most important contribution to it was an article on "Wilhelm Meister," by Friedrich Schlegel, and in his own journal he did not hide his hand. "This impertinent, dogmatic, incisive, and narrow style gives me physical pain," Schiller wrote to Goethe. Goethe was more disposed to be tolerant. In the first place, he enjoyed any attack on Berlin enlightenment. Nicolai could hardly have recovered from the stings of the Xenien,

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and here was another wasp's nest let loose upon him. And then the review of "Wilhelm Meister" was so sympathetic, so reverential, and so striking, that no author who was human could help feeling charitably towards the writer of it. Caroline's account (in a letter to Friedrich) of a conversation her husband had with Goethe on the subject is worth quoting. "He was in the best of humours about *The Athenæum*, and fully appreciates your 'Wilhelm Meister,' for he has grasped not only your serious purpose, but the much-praised irony. . . . First he said it was most excellent, most charming, and then, more definitely, that he warmly approved of the manner in which you had treated it as an organic whole, without restricting yourself to a pathological dismemberment of individual characters. Then he showed that he had read it thoroughly by quoting several expressions, especially the ironical ones. . . . The 'Fragments' have interested him immensely; you had taken up a hostile attitude, but he had no objection to make to that. . . . In Weimar *The Athenæum* is a great deal read."

The inauguration of the Schlegels and their friends as a school with distinct theories and

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aims may be said to date from the first appearance of *The Athenæum*. Distinct, however, is an unfortunate adjective to use in connection with the Romantics. All their efforts tended towards the development of individual freedom. They wished every man to live, to write, and to think as it seemed good in his own eyes without reference to the opinion of his neighbours. So it is not an easy matter to disentangle from their writings and their lives any distinct views which they held in common. The most representative of their literary opinions were expressed by Friedrich Schlegel in his essay on "Wilhelm Meister," and in his "Fragments." The poetical merits of Goethe's novel roused his eager enthusiasm, and, indeed, stirred him to form a new conception of poetry. "It is all poetry, pure, high poetry," he writes. If it came under no class hitherto conceived as poetry, he insisted that existing classes must be altered to suit it. It is a romance, but a romance without peer. The real romance is the *ne plus ultra* of poetry. It is Romantic poetry. It is in this essay that Friedrich Schlegel first uses the word "romantic" as an adjective of superlative praise, and it is from the date of its

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appearance that the word was used to describe the views held by him and his friends. But it is a hopeless task to try to fix the meaning the Romantics themselves attached to it. Friedrich Schlegel uses the word Romantic for the epic of chivalry, and for modern as opposed to classic; and he constantly employs it in the ordinary way as a vague term for what is strange and wonderful, and enveloped in poetic glamour. In the essay on "Wilhelm Meister" he employs it merely as the adjective of romance, romance coinciding with the English word novel. And the aim of Romantic poetry was to unite all kinds of poetry hitherto distinct, and to connect them with philosophy and rhetoric. It was to embrace everything poetical, from the greatest and most comprehensive system of art to the simple song of a child. If Friedrich Schlegel had included less in his definition of Romantic poetry it would have been easier to believe that his meaning was clear to himself. But in spite of his dogmatic tone his use of the word is so vague, fleeting, and changeable, that one is obliged to choose from many meanings, or to rest content with a general conviction that he meant a quintessence of poetry, a potentially

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perfect poetry that every man should aim at, but which no finite being could ever reach. His special definition was, however, soon lost sight of, and Romantic became the common name for a whole body of opinions held by widely different people. They were united, to their credit, by their love of Goethe, by their impatience with the decrepit stages of enlightenment, and by their wish for artistic and social freedom. The absence of healthy moral fibre, the want of moderation and of common sense in their literature and their lives, are unhappily equally common signs by which all men know them.

The theory that Romantic poetry was not the slave of verse and rhythm, but dependent rather on the writer's mood, and capable of equally exquisite expression in prose, was not the only novel conclusion arrived at by Friedrich Schlegel in his essay. The discussion of "Hamlet" helped him to the theory that a criticism must be itself a poem; and there is a visible effort on his part to speak in poetical language and to achieve a musical rise and fall of tone. That criticism and poetry were inseparable was an acceptable doctrine to men

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ambitious of poetical honours and destitute of poetical faculty. Both Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel possessed in a high degree the qualities of critics. They were men of varied culture and of literary enthusiasm; both of them showed a remarkable power of expression, and a genius for seeing and putting into words the incoherent but pressing opinions of their time. But they were not poets, though throughout their lives they believed that they were.

Moreover in Goethe's choice of "Hamlet" for analysis in "Wilhelm Meister," Friedrich Schlegel saw an illustration of that artistic intention for which he considered the whole novel remarkable. At first sight it seems almost absurd that a critic should take pains to show that in writing "Hamlet" Shakespeare had some definite idea, and that in writing "Wilhelm Meister" Goethe had not been without a plan. And yet to this day it is common enough to hear "Hamlet," or "Faust," or any other masterpiece spoken of as if the author's knowledge of his meaning was less secure, and his merit less rare than that of his flightiest reader. Friedrich Schlegel and his brother carried on that reformation in criticism

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of which Lessing and Herder were the pioneers in Germany, and which had for its aim a sincere endeavour to appreciate the great men of all nations and of all times. And the curious popular delusion that a work of genius has its birth in the world (as a fungus seems to spring up in a field) without effort, plan, or purpose, found no acceptance at the hands of men who strove to penetrate beyond the obvious facts of existence and success. In assuring his readers that Goethe was the architect of his novel, and that in choosing "Hamlet" for discussion he was conscious of its fitness for his special purpose, Friedrich Schlegel found occasion to dilate on that "much-praised irony" of which Goethe spoke to Wilhelm Schlegel. On Goethe's lips this celebrated irony probably meant merely that objective standpoint from which a great creative genius presents good and bad alike to us; the impersonal interest felt by Shakespeare in Iago and Desdemona, by Goethe in "Philine" and "Die schöne Seele." But that Romantic irony which became, as Novalis said, the trump-card of the school, played on all occasions, and produced in answer to every reproach, the irony that had such a deplorable influence

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on the literature and lives of the Romantics, was, says Hegel, "invented" by Friedrich Schlegel. It was really the result of a belief that was very commonly arrived at through a misunderstanding of Fichte's philosophy—a belief that the individual is the creator of his own external world and the sole arbiter of his duties in it. It is not at once plain to the unphilosophical why even this belief should lead, as a matter of course, to total neglect of duty, to hysterical melancholy, immorality, and crime. Historically it did assist the Romantics to create a morbid literature, and to transgress in their lives principles dear to healthy and civilized humanity. It helped to foster in them a seductive belief in the prerogative of genius, and from this god-like height to smile disdainfully at the ties linking ordinary human beings together. Hegel says in his explanation of Romantic irony that if the Ego is lord and master of all things, there is nothing, right or wrong, human or divine, profane or holy, it may not destroy. Everything that exists is merely an appearance, created by the Ego and dependent on it. And a man's actions and artistic productions, the arbitrary creations of his phantasy, are not to

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be taken in earnest, but to be looked at with ironical eyes. The true artist is a divinely gifted and ironical creature, who is bound by none of the laws less privileged human beings hold sacred, who has friends and lovers like other men, but unlike other men is absolved by his genius from all duties towards them, and who looks on all people and on all things as the playthings of his disastrous imagination, to be ill-used at his will. This romantic irony was of course a dangerous weapon to the man who handled it as well as to his victims. It is, however, merely the responsibility of perceiving and admiring it that can be laid at Friedrich Schlegel's door. Distrust and weariness of life was an epidemic of the time. The book that illustrates most strikingly the working and the consequences of the "ironical" point of view, Ludwig Tieck's "William Lovell," was written before *The Athenæum* or Friedrich's essay on "Wilhelm Meister" were in existence. Of all the corrupt and sentimental scoundrels that have ever stalked through an imaginary world, this William Lovell is perhaps the most objectionable. His only redeeming quality is his obvious unreality. In a world inhabited by

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shadows like himself, he commits every crime that Tieck's fantastic imagination could invent; and over his misdeeds he sentimentalizes with an insincerity and a pretence at analysis that add the last touch of repulsiveness to his character. After he has betrayed and robbed his friends and murdered his relatives he always writes a letter (the story is told in letters), in which he explains that in a world consisting only of appearances, such words as good or bad can have no meaning. From the ironical point of view life is a shadow-dance — hollow, ridiculous, and unsatisfying; or it is a play, represented best by those who stand outside their parts as an actor stands outside his *rôle*.

Ludwig Tieck, the author of "William Lovell," became a distinguished Romantic poet. He wrote satirical plays, in which every illusion and every law of composition were intentionally violated; in which actors and audience shared the stage, criticised the play, and drew attention to the improbabilities of the scene. And he wrote beautiful fairy stories and musical poetry, all tinged with the weird and melancholy colour of his fancy. In some cases, however, he seemed

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to aim at illustrating Friedrich Schlegel's suggestion that a poem might be devoid of meaning, and yet melodious and enjoyable. He did, in fact, attempt to write a musical overture in words.

It has been already mentioned that Friedrich Schlegel considered it his mission to think and write in fragments. Hence the appearance in *The Athenæum* of page upon page of short paragraphs, each containing in itself a complete idea. He did not, however, write all of them himself. His brother contributed witty and elegant little criticisms; Schleiermacher's subtle and meditative mind was pressed into the service; and Hardenberg, better known as Novalis, made his *début* here with a collection of fragments he called "Blüthenstaub." These four men, so different from each other in their characters and capacities, had certain aims and qualities in common. They all profoundly resented the shallow and dogmatic tone that prevailed in literature and in general society. They were united by the burning wish for wider vision and more generous emotion that touched so many minds in their day. They echoed the cry for freedom, light, and understanding, that

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an older generation—the veterans of storm and stress—had stirred them to listen to and carry on. They caught up the cry and caricatured it. But through their caricatures the true note sounded still. The Romantics, in spite of their follies and their exaggerations, were nearer to the throne of Jove than Nicolai and his Philistines.

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"*LUCINDE.*"

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VIII.

"*LUCINDE.*"

THE study of "Wilhelm Meister" had aroused in Friedrich Schlegel the desire to write a great novel. A novel, he thought, should be a complete revelation of the man who wrote it, of his æsthetic opinions, his artistic faculties, his views of life; no other form of art afforded the same scope. And, as the regeneration of society was in question, Friedrich felt the need of an open field. The wish for fame and the necessity of making money were motives as powerful as his reforming ardour. During the summer of 1798, when they were together in Dresden, his brother

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had taken him seriously to task about his idleness. Even Wilhelm's patience and generosity were not everlasting. Besides, as a married man and supporter of a considerable household, he could no longer afford to supply his brother's needs. He advised Friedrich to get translating work, but the young man was not attracted by any occupation involving drudgery. He determined with a single effort to raise himself above the necessity for steady work. A romance containing his social views, glowing with poetical genius, and well peppered with wit and audacity, could, he imagined, be produced without much trouble, and with the best results to himself. So, when he got back to Berlin, he sat down and wrote "Lucinde."

Something has been said already of Friedrich's life before he went to Berlin. His university career of dissipation and extravagance, his alternate fits of gaiety and despair, his desultory manner of work, and the brilliant promise withal of his earliest literary efforts, combined to make him an attractive figure in a society thirsting for novelty. His good looks, his charm of manner, and his wit were additional recommendations specially powerful with people used to

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see the Graces in discredit. With Schleiermacher's friends he immediately became a favourite. Those Jewish ladies who gathered around them the rising literary men of Berlin, extended a warm welcome to the young man whose devotion to Goethe exceeded even their own. He was soon a privileged member of the little company, and intimate enough to perceive how entirely experimental their lives were made by the novelty of their views. Young impressionable women, married when they were mere children to husbands they had not chosen for themselves, were beginning to make a personal application of the lessons in freedom that they heard on every side. The most interesting to Friedrich was Dorothea Veit, the daughter of Moses Mendelssohn, who had been married when she was sixteen to a wealthy Jewish banker. When she first met Friedrich Schlegel she had been a wife for many years, and was the mother of two sons; but, though she had endured her life with dignity, she had never become resigned to it. Her mind had lain fallow, her tastes had been repressed, her development had been at a standstill. The introduction to Friedrich Schlegel stirred up her smouldering energies.

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She yielded to his personal charm, his eloquence, his boyish enthusiasm. And he was fascinated by her generous devotion and great intelligence. A woman who was ready to give up family, means, and reputation to share the uncertain fortunes of the man she loved, answered to the highest demands he made on feminine excellence. "She is a brave woman, dignified and good," he wrote to his brother, after Dorothea had decided to procure a divorce and cast her lot with Friedrich Schlegel's. "She is very unworldly, and cares for nothing in or out of the world but love, music, wit, and philosophy." Again, Fichte writes to his wife: "The praise of a Jewess will sound strange on my lips; but this woman has banished my belief that nothing good can proceed from that race. She has extraordinary intelligence and knowledge, not indeed of the showy and brilliant kind, but genuine; she is thoroughly unpretentious and gentle. One learns to like her gradually, but with all one's heart." In the conviction that she was doing a courageous and admirable thing, Dorothea left her husband in the winter of 1798, and, directly her divorce from him was accomplished, she committed

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herself to Friedrich Schlegel's keeping. "Be glad," he wrote to Caroline, "that now my life has reason, foundation, aim, and shape. Now extraordinary things may come to pass." They did not get married immediately. In those days a union between a Christian and a Jewess presented grave difficulties, and, for the sake of keeping her son Philip with her, Dorothea did not incline to a formal conversion. There is an abominable passage in one of Friedrich's letters that is always quoted against him. He expresses his aversion to marriage as an institution, and he looks forward to the time when Dorothea will be an old woman and he still a young man. He wishes, he says, to keep the power of choosing a younger consort when that time comes. But Friedrich's promises were always startling, and his performances commonplace. He married Dorothea a year or two later, and made her a very faithful and a very trying husband. Meanwhile their illegal union was a cause of terrible scandal to every one respectable in Berlin. Henrietta Herz kept true to her old friend in spite of her husband's objections, but the world in general turned its back on the sinners. "We all belong to the tribe of glorious

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outlaws," Friedrich Schlegel wrote to Caroline. Fichte, Tieck, and Schleiermacher were constant guests at the new *ménage*, and there was a talk at one time of Fichte and his wife forming one large household with the Schlegels from Jena and Friedrich and Dorothea. "I get on splendidly with Fichte," wrote Dorothea, "and altogether I take as naturally to this Philosophical Club as if I had never been used to anything worse. Only I still feel a certain fear of Fichte, but that is not so much his fault as the result of my position towards the world and towards Friedrich."

It was during the first year of their union that Friedrich Schlegel wrote "Lucinde," the notorious novel that is considered a manifesto of the social views of the Romantics. The modern reader's first impression is one of surprise that a book so astoundingly dull and incoherent should have raised the storm it did. But in the first place the veil of fictitious names and circumstances was then so transparent as to conceal nothing: the book therefore appealed to the widespread interest most people feel in their neighbours' affairs, especially when these affairs are a little scandalous or tragic.

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And then the opinions put forth were so unpopular and audacious, and yet so much in harmony with certain other modern opinions, that every one lent an ear to them either with pleasure or for the sake of attacking them with the utmost violence.

The book begins with a letter from Julius to Lucinde, an erotic rhapsody, that concludes with an announcement of the writer's intention to observe no system in the book. Instead of explaining at this early date who he is and what he has to do with Lucinde, and who she is, he goes on to a dithyrambic phantasy. "How can one write what it is scarcely allowable to say, what one ought only to feel?" asks Lucinde at the end. "I answer," says Julius, "that what one feels one must wish to say, and what one wishes to say one may write. . . . There is in a man's nature a certain blundering ecstasy that likes to blab of everything tender and sacred." To these principles the book is throughout steadfast. A short chapter called "Characteristics of Little Wilhelmina," in which the writer claims for himself a right to a child's *sans gêne*, is followed by an allegorical vision in which, as Schiller wrote to Goethe, "the author

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chooses Impudence herself to be his goddess." The allegory is followed by a rambling discourse in praise of Love and by an Idyl of Indolence that has met with serious disapproval. For my part, with the ring in my ears of Friedrich's merry and playful letters to Auguste, and of his sober exhortations to her to be industrious, I am inclined to think his critics have taken him rather ponderously. Perhaps he was hardly in earnest when, for instance, he says, "The study of Indolence ought not to be so culpably neglected; it ought rather to be elevated to an art, a science, a religion! To put the thing in a nutshell, the more divine a man or a work of man the greater the resemblance to a plant. Amongst all the forms of nature this is the most moral, the most beautiful. And so the highest, completest life would be nothing but pure vegetation."

The real story of Lucinde begins with a chapter called "Lehrjahre der Männlichkeit," and it is an account of the hero's young manhood. "To play faro with an appearance of eager passion, and yet to be distrait and absent; to risk everything at a critical moment, and to turn indifferently away when all was lost, these

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were only some of the bad habits that wrecked Julius' turbulent youth." This is the first sentence of a description that contains all the fascinating familiar terms common to descriptions of Romantic heroes. The seed of early corruption, burning and devastating passions, disdain, pride, obstinacy, savage humour, mental ferment, are nowadays such hackneyed heroic qualities that they have perhaps even lost a little of their charm. But when Lucinde was written muscular but sentimental libertines were not so fashionable as they have since become, and in describing Julius, Friedrich Schlegel was quite sincerely trying to describe himself. Julius would have been surprised at nothing, least of all at his own ruin. He lived without aim and without industry. Even a new dissipation lost its attraction with its novelty. He falls in love with an innocent young girl, only to regret, when it is too late, that he has been "awkward and ridiculous" enough not to accomplish her ruin. He breathes a few sighs at the feet of a married woman, he shows his contempt for "the prejudices of society" by attaching himself to a beautiful Magdalene who commits suicide for

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his sake; he is cured of his own inclinations that way by the sight of the unique Juliane-Caroline, and he is rewarded in the end by the appearance of Lucinde. She was a young artist who did not practise painting as a trade or an art, but for the love of it and for pleasure. "Lucinde had a decided leaning towards the Romantic. . . . She had severed all ties and trampled on all considerations in order to lead a free and independent life. . . . Moreover she confessed, not without extreme agitation, that she had been a mother. . . . In Lucinde's arms Julius recovered his lost youth. . . . He made progress in his painting now that his life unfolded itself in harmony and completeness. . . . Lightly and melodiously the years passed by like a lovely song." Julius' apprenticeship ends with his discovery that a man's love is a mixture of passion and friendship, and in the full enjoyment and consideration of his complicated feelings the autobiography comes to a close. A chapter on Metamorphoses follows, full of unanswerable and incomprehensible assertions: such as that "Every one gives the same as he takes, one like another; everything is whole and equal

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and complete in itself, like the eternal kiss of the divine children." Next we have two letters, from which we learn that Lucinde is about to become a mother, and that the future father is concerned to know whether she would wish her child to take to portrait or to landscape painting. The importance of the impending event does to his credit bring him down to earth for a time. He even countenances the purchase of a small estate, and prophesies that he will live to sing the praises of hearth and home. After this concession to the commonplace the writer soars back again to his region of mist and obscurity. There are two letters "to Antonio" professing to express the writer's views of friendship, but really giving a wounding publicity to his discontent with Schleiermacher. There is a final dialogue between Julius and Lucinde, and for a conclusion an incoherent and fantastic rhapsody that, as far as the common understanding can decipher its meaning at all, is in praise of aimlessness and uncontrolled emotion.

The book created a scandal throughout Germany, and deepened the aversion generally felt for the opinions of the Romantic School. "It

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is the acme of modern formlessness and unnaturalness," wrote Schiller to Goethe. "It is impossible to read it through because its empty gabble makes one ill." "Every one reads it, every one abuses it," answered Goethe next day. There were towns in Germany which years later would not suffer the author of "Lucinde" to set his foot in their streets. In Berlin it was severely censured by those Jewish families with whom Dorothea was connected, and by those amongst her new friends who possessed the manliness and discretion her lover lacked. Wilhelm Schlegel published a sonnet in praise of its "glow," but he called it a foolish rhapsody in private. Schleiermacher was shocked at the "public exhibition" of intimate experiences, although he was generously stirred to write the famous "Vertrauten Briefe über die Lucinde," in which all the accusations made against the book were shown to be malicious and unfounded. That a society so corrupt and artificial should take offence at Friedrich Schlegel's outspokenness, and see in "Lucinde" nothing but an "apotheosis of the flesh," roused his indignation. He saw in it no shameful blow at family life, no impudent parade of

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objectionable opinions, but a brave and generous plea for the emancipation of women. The social and political subjection of women had always been a sore point with Friedrich Schlegel. The fashionable poetic view of feminine excellence was as displeasing to him as the most prosaic one. Weaving heavenly roses through the tangled threads of an active masculine life did not appear to him to promise any one much satisfaction. At a time when all men were standing up for individual rights he encouraged women to strike a blow for theirs. Unfortunately his motives were sounder than his judgment. The majority of civilized men and women do not as yet think that the salvation of society depends on the destruction of the marriage laws. Friedrich Schlegel and many of his friends and disciples believed quite sincerely that marriage was an injurious and abject institution. It seemed horrible to him that two people who had ceased to care for each other should still live side by side; or that either husband and wife should incur disgrace by yielding to a "natural" preference for a third person; or that the wife's rights and privileges should not be equal to the husband's,

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They acted on these theories with deplorable consistency, treating the most sacred affections and ties as if they were the shackles of conventionalism. They fell into the common danger of treating complex and difficult social questions from an artistic point of view, with the usual mischievous and discreditable results to their companions and themselves. The Romantics are constantly reproached with indifference to the great questions of their day. They took no part, it is said, in the political difficulties besetting Germany, and in the strides made by science and philanthropy. They recognized no interests that were not associated with art and poetry, and could breathe in no atmosphere that was not imaginative and sentimental. These accusations can be met to some extent, though not very fully. But the reflection inevitably suggested by a study of "Lucinde" is one of regret that men so eminently unpractical did not confine themselves strictly to the literary work they did so well. Their attempts to regenerate society were not very successful either in theory or example.

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AUGUSTE BÖHMER.

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IX.

AUGUSTE BÒHMER.

WHEN Caroline and Auguste returned to Jena in the autumn of 1798 they found their new friend Schelling already installed there. Fichte was still Professor of Philosophy at Jena, and he had managed with Goethe's help to procure for the young man an "extra" professorship without salary. Schelling had not hesitated for a moment to accept a position which in spite of pecuniary drawbacks was a most attractive one to an ambitious man. He had rejoiced over the failure of an application made in his name by his father for the Chair of Logic at Tübingen, a theological university

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where a man of his opinions would have moved in shackles. It would have been "too small an existence for him," he said. But to lecture at Jena, the headquarters of philosophical thought, was the first step towards every honour in his path.

After school and college days that had only been marked by successive triumphs, Schelling had distinguished himself by philosophical writings. Although he followed closely in Fichte's footsteps, he did not assume the tone of a disciple, but rather of an original thinker on the same level and in the same field. Fichte, the most generous and simple-minded of men, did not resent the young man's assumption of equality. He took a warm interest in his development, and expressed a wish for his assistance and companionship. Goethe, too, was attracted by Schelling's fine manners and striking presence; and these early favourable impressions deepened into a warm friendship as he saw more of the young man. Gries says that Schelling was one of the very few men who in personal intercourse increased the favourable impression made by their writings. Without being regularly handsome, his appear-

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ance was as powerful and energetic as his mind. Dorothea Veit describes him as powerful, daring, noble, and abrupt. To her mind a general's uniform would have clothed him more suitably than a professorial gown. Heinrich Steffens, Schelling's devoted disciple and admirer, was present at his first lecture in Jena. "Professors and students were gathered together in the great lecture room," he tells us. "Schelling went into the desk; his appearance was youthful—he was two years younger than I—and the first of those distinguished men whose acquaintance I longed so eagerly to make. In his manner and appearance there was something decided, nay, almost defiant, broad cheek bones, the brows widely separated, a high forehead, an energetic expression of face, the nose slightly *retroussé*, in his large clear eyes dominating intellectual power. When he began to speak he was only embarrassed for a few minutes. The subject was one which at that time filled his whole soul."

Soon after this opening lecture Schelling was able to tell his parents, who were, perhaps, a little anxious about his prospects, that the first series of lectures he had arranged was attended

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by forty listeners, and would bring him enough to live on through that winter. The necessaries of life were cheap in Germany in those days. Schelling, in writing to his parents for a servant, promises him free board, lodging, and livery, about four pounds yearly for his wages, and two shillings a week for his dinner. His own dinner, he explains, only costs three shillings a week. The servant is to light fires, black boots, make coffee, *and write a good hand:* because he will have to copy his master's manuscripts. "I am very happy here," writes Schelling; "I have ample leisure, and, moreover, I have youth, and strength, and courage. I can develop in silence until I suddenly appear before the world and you metamorphosed. Then you will acknowledge that the chair of logic and metaphysics in Tübingen would be too small an existence for me."

It was not easy for a young professor whose lectures were heard with enthusiasm, and who was a general favourite in society, to shut himself up with his work. There were several houses in Jena at which the literary people in the town met frequently, sometimes for private theatricals, often for informal talk and a little

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card-playing, now and then to meet Goethe. Fromman the publisher, and Schiller, kept open house in this simple fashion, and Caroline, with the exquisite tact and grace that all her contemporaries accord to her, made her husband's hearth a favourite gathering-place. In her presence the general talk drifted towards serious interests without losing the light and airy tone that is best in harmony with a large company. Every question of importance to her friends found fuller expression with her help. She was born with a rare aptitude for persuading those around her to give of their best. Her influence was as inspiriting as the sunshine: it gave warmth and colour, and guaranteed good spirits. The young Romantics who came in and out of her house adored her. They read their poems and plays in her drawing-room, and found her always ready to listen and encourage. They fluttered about Auguste, who was growing into a very engaging young girl. They listened with respect to Wilhelm Schlegel's literary opinions, and with amusement to Caroline's disparaging remarks about Schiller and his poems. The hostility between Schiller and the Schlegels had become so pronounced, that it

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was hardly possible for them to have an intimate friend in common. Goethe, when he stayed in Jena, always called on the Schlegels, and saw a good deal of Wilhelm. But their intercourse was almost entirely of a business nature. And Schelling, who went to Schiller with the best of recommendations—Goethe's praises—never got beyond the preliminary stages of friendship. He was known to be in the good graces of Dame Lucifer.

The great event of the autumn of 1798 was the production of Wallenstein's *Lager* at Weimar. All Jena went over for it, but Caroline did not take Auguste because the tickets were so expensive, a stall costing three shillings. Fichte was there, and persuaded Caroline to drink four glasses of champagne after the play. Schelling drove back with her that night instead of Wilhelm Schlegel, who stayed behind to see Goethe. "Henceforth Schelling intends to wall himself in," she writes to Friedrich Schlegel, "but he will not succeed in doing it. He is rather the kind of man to break down walls. Believe me, friend, he is a more interesting man than you admit, a true primeval nature, sterling granite." "But where will the man of

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granite find his mate?" asks Friedrich in reply. "Write what you like about him. If he is not so infinitely interesting to me, perhaps it is on account of your interest in him. However, he seemed to me a good and remarkable man, but rather unripe." This disparaging remark is explained a line or two further on. Schelling does not understand Novalis; his admiration of Tieck is merely superficial; he has no conception at all of Friedrich Schlegel.

This winter of 1798–9 was one of great literary activity amongst the young Romantic School. In Berlin the preparations for Dorothea's divorce, and subsequent establishment, of course occupied much of Friedrich Schlegel's attention. But his letters to Caroline show that he was also deeply interested in the production of *The Athenæum*, and in the growth of his "Lucinde." Wilhelm Schlegel was still busy with his translation of Shakespeare. Schleiermacher, Tieck, and Novalis were all at work. And the conviction that they were united by common aims and opinions, and leagued for high ends against a Philistine outside world, was still new enough to keep alive a great enthusiasm amongst them. Each sensation

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made by one of the band was hailed as a triumph by the rest. They read each other's works with avidity, and hailed each new production with a flourish. Friedrich Schlegel found time to pursue his correspondence with Caroline, and to write those bright and lovable letters to Auguste that are so much more attractive than the fourteen volumes of his "works." Auguste was growing into a charming young lady. Having grown up at her mother's side, and without the companionship of other children, she was probably open to the charge of being spoiled. Idolized by her mother, her young stepfather, and her Uncle Fritz, it would have been a miracle if she had not become just a little precocious and self-willed. But there is plentiful testimony to her attractions. She was a very lively and graceful girl, accomplished for her age, though not without a touch of dainty disdain for her illiterate fellow-creatures. Her portrait was painted by Tischbein this winter of 1798, and the engraving from it is of a delicate-featured, intelligent girl, with *espiègle* mouth and eyes. At Christmas the same year her stepfather gave her a new piano, for her mother watched over her musical education with

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great care. Her Uncle Fritz provided her with books and literary advice, and a little wholesome ridicule when she became too self-satisfied. She may read "Hamlet," though she will not understand it. She is to read "Moritz's Travels in England," and "Wilhelm Meister," and above all "Don Quixote." On one occasion she wrote a letter to Tieck and Uncle Fritz in doggerel rhymes, which was thought a clever performance.

In the spring of 1799 Friedrich's letters are full of his arrangements for a visit from his brother with Caroline and Auguste. But the plan fell through on account of Iffland's departure from Berlin. He was director of the chief theatre there, and Wilhelm Schlegel hoped to persuade him to produce the new translation of Shakespeare's plays. All through the summer and autumn Caroline stayed at home, busied with her hospitable duties. Professor Schelling and some friends, who were without a cook, dined with them every day; Tieck and Novalis both stayed in her house for some weeks; after them her mother and her sister Luise, with husband, child, and servant, arrived. Frau Tischbein and four children

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came soon after, and Friedrich Schlegel walked in unexpectedly one day, making the eighteenth person at the daily dinner-table. After the departure of these summer guests, Caroline had just time to get her house set straight before Dorothea Veit and her little son appeared.

Auguste had gone to Dessau with the Tischbeins in September for the sake of getting better music lessons and concerts than were to be had in Jena. At first her mother felt terribly lonely. It rained hard all day. "I could think of no other consolation," she wrote to her daughter, "but to buy a quantity of flowers and surround myself with them. They were my children; they wafted their fragrance sweetly to me, but they could not sing." She tells Auguste all the home news. This evening they are going to sup with Schelling, "to consecrate his new nest." He is pleased that you have made a Bacchus of him by calling him the Wine Giver. He might also be called the Joy Giver, for he is kind and lovable and bright, and he sends word to you that when you come back you are not to meet him like a coy schoolgirl. Then she tells Auguste how the days are passing in her absence. Dorothea has not arrived

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yet, and Friedrich is doing nothing but await her. Every day they all take long walks together, often five hours long. Every morning Wilhelm walks about with Goethe for three hours, and looks through the new volume of Goethe's poems about to be published. On October 6th Dorothea arrives, and Caroline writes the same evening and describes the new sister-in-law. Her appearance is Jewish, she is not beautiful, she is broader than Caroline, but not taller. Her voice is softer and more womanly than her features. Fritz is giving Caroline and Schelling an Italian lesson every evening. "Wilhelm makes verses, Schelling reads them, Dorothea listens to them, thy mother thinks them, Tieck does all together." They have "nearly fallen from their chairs with laughing at 'Die Glocke,' a new ridiculous poem by Schiller, *à la* Voss, *à la* Tieck, *à la* Teufel." Schelling's brother has arrived, a raw young cub, speaking with a provincial accent, much to the distinguished Wilhelm's amusement. Tieck and his wife are often with them, and Tieck reads aloud Holberg's plays and his own.

Perhaps it was partly her mother's letter,

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so full of their pleasant and varied home-life, that made Auguste home-sick. Caroline had some trouble to persuade her to stay on in Dessau. "My dearest girl, your mind is wholly set on amusement," she writes gravely, "and that is not the way for you to become fit for anything. . . . We have spoilt the little person. . . . What you last said about Schelling was not pretty. If you struggle against him thus I shall think you are jealous of your mother. Of course he did not send the message about the coy schoolgirl. I sent it, and in what way was it incomprehensible? I think your manners are sometimes as acid as an unripe apple. I must tell you something of Schelling in proof of his kindness. Without telling me he sent for black feathers for my hat, which are very becoming to me. Think of that. I was quite embarrassed." In November Auguste came back from Dessau. "I long for you," wrote Caroline; "you are no longer a daughter, but a sister coming from afar: God bless you."

While reading the letters about Auguste written by her mother, and by the men who admired her, it is difficult to remember how

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young she was. One continually imagines that the girl they speak of must be at least seventeen. On her return from Dessau Auguste was not fifteen, and yet it was all through the following winter that her mother watched and fostered Schelling's growing love for her. The three months away from home had doubtless added more to her apparent age than the same time spent in Jena would have done. The change of scene and surroundings had helped her to make one of those sudden starts that sometimes bring a young girl to the verge of womanhood so rapidly. Her education had received its finishing touches. She had even fallen in love a little,—with a tenor singer about whom Caroline lightly twits her. When she came home Professor Schelling was constantly in her company, a man of acknowledged power and daily growing fame, with the fire of youth and strength and courage in his face and voice, an affectionate and gentle friend, a passionate lover. "Thou bride of the burning sun," he wrote to his betrothed years later when Caroline and Auguste were but memories in his life. And although the title has no place in the story of his young

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manhood, it always comes back with the picture of his friendship for the sweet mother and her daughter. He was the light and warmth of their world.

From the time of Auguste's return to Jena, in the autumn of 1799, to the end of March, 1800, few letters are preserved. We know that Friedrich and Dorothea were still in Jena, and that Wilhelm Schlegel was hard at work, and not as much as usual in his wife's company. Auguste corresponded with her friends in Dessau, and one of the letters she received from Caroline Tischbein is interesting and instructive. "Schelling is very polite, you say: Fritz unaltered. Well, I am glad of that. But what a sly puss she is, with her standing aloof and behaving coldly to Schelling, who is good enough to wish that she would consider him a friend! Have you repented it already, and do you behave more politely to him? Oh, that's it! The poor little goose blushes when she is asked a question. . . . She knows not why." And later—"Schelling is very kind and much nicer, even charming, you write. You 'like him very much.' So, so, my dear. I like that. . . .

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Even his brother now finds favour in your eyes. . . ."

The next news we have is of Caroline's serious illness. Auguste writes to tell Frau Gotter of it on March 31, 1800. The tone of her letter is girlish and pleasing, but not flattering to Auguste's nursing powers. Caroline had been ill for a week with a nervous fever. Then a mustard-plaister that was put on her leg had been left there too long, and after that the wrong ointment had been applied. This gave poor Caroline great pain and helped to bring about a relapse. After a month's illness she expected to drive out soon; but her convalescence was so protracted and unsatisfactory that her doctors ordered her to try the baths of Boklet in Bavaria. She left home in the beginning of May, accompanied by Auguste and Schelling, and for part of the journey by her husband also. Schelling was going to work in the hospital at Bamberg, and the picturesque old town, set on a hill amidst beautifully wooded country, was a good halting-place for Caroline and Auguste. They meant to make a very short stay there, but first they were detained by a spell of bad

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weather, and then they discovered that the lodging-houses in Boklet were under repair, and would not be ready for visitors for a fortnight. So everything conspired to keep mother and daughter in Schelling's company. The neighbourhood was well worth exploring, and, as far as a spell of rainy weather would allow, they walked and drove all over it. On one occasion they went to the favourite summer resort of the Bambergers, where every one met twice a week for music and dancing. But the company was not distinguished enough to please Auguste. She refused to join them, and went home, after having looked on for a little while.

Schelling left Bamberg towards the end of May to pay a visit to his parents. Whether any engagement or even any definite understanding existed at this time between Auguste and himself is not clear. The general opinion is that Caroline encouraged his courtship of her daughter, although she was not indifferent to him herself, and that Schelling loved Auguste only. That he should have loved mother and daughter at the same time; that mother and daughter should have regarded

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the same man with similar feelings—these are not admissions to be easily made. And yet there are phrases in Auguste's letters that must always suggest the more complicated and mysterious relations. She writes with the affectionate frankness of a very young girl, and with no objection apparently to becoming a messenger between her mother and her lover. It is impossible to think that she had arrived at anything approaching to a woman's understanding of her mother's plans for her union with Schelling. "I thank you heartily for your suggestion of a plan to keep up my mother's spirits," she writes; "it succeeds splendidly. When every other device fails, I need only say, 'How much he loves you!' and she gets cheerful at once. The first time I said it she wanted to know how much you loved her—and there my wisdom was at an end. I got out of the difficulty by saying—more than anything—she was content, and I hope you will be too."

They miss him terribly, she tells him, and begs him to come back to them. Auguste has no one to take her out in the evenings, and they are bored by visitors they do not

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care for. On the 9th of June Auguste finishes a letter to him by saying that she has been ill all day and must not write at length. Caroline adds that Auguste has been feverish, and is not better yet. She speaks of Schelling's plans and says, "You know that I will follow you wherever you will, for your work and life are sacred to me."

On June 12th Caroline and Auguste went to Boklet, and on July 6th Schelling writes to Wilhelm Schlegel that he has joined them there and found Caroline quite restored to health, but Auguste ill. He expects, however, that in a few days she will be well enough to return to Bamberg, where, with the consent and approval of Caroline's husband, this romantic trio meant to pass the autumn together. But the poor girl got worse instead of better. The doctor who attended her seems to have been an incompetent one. At any rate, although he must have known the case was serious, he deceived Schelling and Caroline with promises of Auguste's immediate recovery, thus hindering them from calling in either of two great physicians who lived in Bamberg, and were their friends.

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Schelling to some extent interfered with Auguste's treatment. He was not without medical knowledge, and he prescribed drugs that are now universally administered in cases of dysentery. But on July 12, 1800, Auguste died, when she was little more than fifteen years old. She was buried nine miles from Bamberg, "in a narrow valley where Nature smiles, and there is no thought of death. She rests in a tiny village churchyard, whence you can take in the whole valley at a glance."

It is Wilhelm Schlegel who thus describes her grave to Frau Gotter, for Caroline was too ill to write. Her husband was with her watching over her with his usual conscientiousness and kindness. If Auguste had been his own child, he could not have bewailed her loss more bitterly. He wrote a series of poems in lamentation of her, when he was sufficiently recovered to think of rhyme and rhythm again.

Poor Caroline could find no comfort in poetry. She was broken-hearted. Night and day she cried and mourned and would not be consoled. When she was well enough to

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move, her husband took her to her mother at Braunschweig. On the way she spent two nights at Gotha with her old friend. "Brace yourself," she wrote beforehand, "to bear the sight of me. I am only half alive, and wander like a shade upon the earth."

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DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE.

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X.

DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE.

AFTER Auguste's death the energy shown by Schelling, as long as there was any hope of saving her, gave way to complete prostration. For some time he lay in Bamberg, too ill to move; and when he was well enough to communicate with his friends again the tone of his letters terrified them. "You seem to have lost all courage," wrote Steffens; "surely Auguste was dearer to you than I imagined. . . . I scarcely like to tell you what her death is to me—to me too," he confided to Schelling in another letter. "That splendid girl. I do not understand her death. So full of life and bloom

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—and now dead. I cannot speak of it. Oh, she was dearer to me than any one knows, than I would acknowledge to myself. . . . Remember me to her unhappy mother."

Caroline and her husband stayed in Bamberg until the 1st of October, by which time Schelling had sufficiently recovered to travel in their company as far as Koburg, and from there to drive to Jena, through the Thuringian Forest with his friend Gries. All that autumn and winter he lectured regularly, and continued his scientific and philosophical research; but he worked under the weight of a sorrow that over and over again drove him to think of suicide. Happily for him he was not compelled to bear his grief in loneliness. Caroline could measure his anguish by her own. The depths of her affectionate and womanly nature were stirred for his sake; all the interest of her life now centred in him. To comfort and uphold him had become her most pressing occupation. Her letters to him show how sorrow and time have changed her since the days of her early love for Tatter. She had never before been so serious, so sincere, and so unselfish. She could not desert Schelling, she could hardly conceal her

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love for him, She never attempts to deny that she lives in him rather than in herself. When his work is read aloud in a large company she trembles with consciousness of her peculiar interest in him; his letters give her such a shock of joy that her weak frame is prostrate after it. She counts the hours till she hears his voice and looks in his eyes again. Yet with incredible self-deception she persuades herself that this glow of passion is maternal solicitude. "Goethe and I! what strange parents for thee!" she says to Schelling. . . . "As thy mother I greet thee—no memory shall torture us. Henceforth thou art my child's brother. . . . Henceforth it would be a sin to wish to be anything else to each other. . . . Why art thou so downcast? Thou hast good reason to be so; . . . but one must never be as sad as one's fate. . . . Auguste is always present with me. . . . I only live and move in thee, my sweet child—ah, do not disturb my tranquil sorrow, dear Schelling, by giving me cause to grieve so bitterly for thee."

A state of such prolonged and painful excitement was of course a heavy strain on Caroline's physical strength. All that winter, while she was with her family in Braunschweig, her

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health was a cause of anxiety. She lived very quietly, feeling too depressed to go into society, and finding that even a visit to the theatre entailed more fatigue than she could stand. On her way to Braunschweig she had spent three days in Göttingen before the official decree against her presence there could be enforced, and soon after that she paid a visit to a splendid country house, in which such treasures of art were gathered together that the whole reminded her of the uncle's castle in "Wilhelm Meister." But the exertion proved too much for her, and on her return to Braunschweig she was so ill that her husband gave up his journey to Berlin to stay with her. He employed himself in writing his famous parody of Kotzebue, or in working on at his translation of Shakespeare. He was still with his wife on New Year's Eve, the last night of the eighteenth century. They spent it in an uninteresting way, Wilhelm asleep on the sofa and Caroline brewing punch in another room with her sister. As the clock struck twelve she went to wake him, and they met on the stairs like the old century and the new. In honour, however, of the new-born year 1800, Herr and Madame

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Schlegel gave a supper, at which, she says, there were fine people, fine food, fine wine, and fine wit.

In February Wilhelm Schlegel went to Berlin, and Caroline had a double correspondence on her hands. She does not write to her husband in a tone of passionate love and tenderness. She does not often touch on her inner life or on her grief for Auguste. She gives him literary news and tells him all that happens to friends and enemies; she takes a genuine interest in his work, and describes her own occupations. She urges him to accomplish some really great original work. "Oh, my friend," she writes, "say to yourself again and again and for ever, how short life is, and that nothing has such a real existence as a work of art. Criticism vanishes, whole races are blotted out—systems change—but when one day the world is burnt up like a scrap of paper, then works of art will be the last of the living sparks that go into God's house—only after that can darkness come."

Although Caroline continued to write to Schelling in a strain that was bound to fan the fire in his breast and her own, she was, never-

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theless, convinced that any closer union between them was impossible. It was indeed only her memories of Auguste that brought her to such a conclusion. The Romantics considered the marriage tie a merely legal one, not binding in any moral sense when the comfort of husband or wife demanded that it should be severed. It seems, however, as if at this date Wilhelm Schlegel must have felt concerned about his wife, for when her return to Jena is under discussion she writes to him: "What I have to say to you is this—I can never give up Schelling as a friend; but at the same time I can never in any case overstep a boundary that we both agree to keep. This is the first and only vow of my life, and I shall keep it—for I have taken Schelling into my soul as the brother of my child."

Whether Wilhelm Schlegel rested in a false security on the strength of his wife's assurances, or whether he was indifferent to a state of things that would have seriously disturbed a husband of ordinary views, is not very plain. At all events he took no steps to keep his wife out of danger. Perhaps he was convinced before he went to Berlin that her love for him was dead. If so, his principles would have all

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weighed against any effort to preserve his marital rights. And while her husband went about his business, leaving Caroline to her own devices, Schelling was assailing her with the fire and the persistence of a youthful lover. It was easier for her to convince her husband and herself that her resolve was firm than to impose it on Schelling. He paid no attention to her struggles and her victories. He clung to her lavish confessions of love, and insisted that their meaning should not be twisted to appease her conscience. And his imperious nature overcame all her efforts at resistance. His displeasure shatters her, yet she replies to it with remonstrances. It is easier, she acknowledges, for a woman than for a man to practise resignation. She will come to Jena as he wishes. "A year ago," she writes in March—"oh, you know what I am going to say—you gathered violets with my child, and you brought them to her sick mother; now, perhaps, they are coming up from the earth that covers her. Poor mother! why not from thy grave instead? My two darlings would kneel on it in tender sorrow. I should not have made you unhappy as she has made us."

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In this mood, torn by conflicting love and grief, harassed by compassion and perplexity, Caroline passed the early months of the new year. In March she was made ill by the sorrow and agitation of seeing her sister's little boy die of the disease which had killed Auguste. When she could travel she went to spend a few weeks with her brother Philip, who was married and settled in Harburg. It was a total change of scene and surroundings. The social tone of Hamburg and Harburg, the eternal military and political talk, the ignorance of those literary matters that she thought all-important, wearied her. She felt herself amongst savages when she heard people wonder who paid for literary work, and who read Fichte's books. She longed to escape from Bœotia and get back to Athens. So she set out through a country swarming with troops of all nations, and excited by rumours of war.

Her arrival at Jena and her return to the home that she had left with her child beside her was of course an ordeal. Even the delight of finding herself once more in Schelling's company was mixed with pain. And as one after another the old friends who had known and loved

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Auguste presented themselves the grief that was so physically exhausting broke out anew. All through the summer and the succeeding winter she was in a wretched state of health that gave her friends much anxiety, and forced her to lead an inactive life. She lay whole days in a condition that was almost comatose, the exertion of writing a letter to her husband would give her a day's headache, the smallest excitement was followed by complete nervous prostration. Julia Gotter, the daughter of her old friend, came to stay with her and help in the household management. Caroline's sister and her child were with her for some time, but they do not seem to have been an assistance. Schelling was constantly in and out, and took his daily meals at Caroline's table. Friedrich Schlegel paid her a formal visit on her arrival and sought no further intercourse with her. Their old friendship had ended in an irreconcilable estrangement. Caroline misses no opportunity in her letters to Wilhelm of disparaging his brother. Of Dorothea she speaks with still more acrid dislike and contempt. The existing correspondence does not throw an agreeable light on any one concerned. Caroline accuses

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Dorothea of having talked unpleasantly to mutual friends about the inner life of her household—a treacherous kind of gossip that she might well resent. Friedrich had given her offence by speaking to his brother of Schelling's attentions; and both Friedrich and Dorothea had the lowest opinion of Caroline and Schelling. In short, these four persons carried on a lively family quarrel, and their recriminations were all poured into Wilhelm Schlegel's perplexed ears. He behaved as usual with kindness and good sense. As long as his wife bore his name he defended her loyally, and at the same time he did not allow her to disturb the old affectionate relations that bound him to his brother.

Caroline's neighbours of course talked loudly of her intimacy with Schelling. Beyond providing herself with companions she seems to have taken no pains to avoid remark. Schelling spent all his spare time at her house. When she went to the theatre in Weimar he escorted her, refusing even to sup with Goethe, for the sake of driving her home. She threw herself with enthusiasm into the study of his philosophy and became completely his disciple. She

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read and criticized his poetry with interest, and appealed to her husband to decide a difficult point in connection with certain hexameter lines. They walked, ate, drank, and studied together every day and all day. No wonder that the scandal-mongers of Jena were busy with their names. But it must not be supposed that Wilhelm Schlegel felt injured and offended in the ordinary way. All the facts of his wife's life that served most fully to justify public opinion were brought under his notice in her letters without any suspicion that they could be unpleasing to him. Schelling and he continued the best of friends, giving each other all the assistance possible, and speaking of Caroline with an assumption of mutual affection and regard that would have suited a correspondence between her lover and her brother.

In September, 1801, Wilhelm Schlegel came to Jena for about two months. He did not bring Schleiermacher with him, although Schelling and Caroline were both anxious to make his acquaintance. When Wilhelm went back to Berlin in November it was arranged that Caroline should shortly join him there. But although her journey was discussed in their

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letters through the winter, she never set out. She lived very soberly, sending Julie Gotter to balls and concerts, but rarely going into society herself. Her removal to a more commodious and airy house made her busy after Christmas, and her leisure time was given up to literary work. She occupied herself with the study and translation of Italian poetry, and she occasionally wrote reviews for *The Athenæum* and other papers.

Wilhelm Schlegel even entrusted her with the review of his great drama, "Ion," which was produced anonymously at Weimar on January 2, 1802. He considered that it was a *pendant* to Goethe's "Iphigenie," and an improvement on the "Ion" of Euripides. Goethe himself took the utmost pains with the stage decorations, the assignment of the chief parts, and even with those unspoken touches that add so much to the general effect. The first performance was a brilliant success. Caroline was present at it, and wrote a long description of the costumes, the scenery, and the acting for her husband's information. Schelling, who had remained in Weimar after the play, brought her fresh confirmation of her early

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impressions. Every one had been pleased by the performance. It was the event of the theatrical year. The name of the author had leaked out, but even the enemies of the Romantic School admitted that Wilhelm Schlegel's drama was a respectable piece of work. Immediately after the first representation Caroline wrote an account of it which Schelling sent to *Die Elegante Zeitung*, after having helped her, amidst much merriment, to erase many a turn and phrase betraying a prejudiced and feminine hand. The result was an article that seriously annoyed Wilhelm Schlegel. In the first place, the editor headed it "Ion: a Play after Euripides." And then Caroline dwelt so pointedly on the beauties of the performance, and so slightly on the excellence of the poem, that the tone of the whole was not very flattering to the poet. Caroline met her husband's reproaches by reminding him that he had neglected to answer her questions concerning the extent of his debt to Euripides. She maintained also that to unfold the plot of a new play in a review of the first performance was to take the edge off public curiosity. Wilhelm, however, wrote anonymously to the same paper

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and drew attention to the superiority of the German "Ion" to the Greek one. The modern play, in his opinion, combined French elegance and correctness with classic strength. The correspondence did not finish here, for under the guise of praise Schelling wrote anonymously and attacked the morality of the play. That is to say, he asserted that a poem of such merit was not to be judged by any ordinary moral standard—a compliment that always carries with it the sound of an apology. The play, as a matter of fact, was not the great work any of the three reviewers thought it. The plot in its modern dress is unpleasant, but the characters are so stiff and wooden that their doings excite neither sympathy nor censure. Wilhelm Schlegel could not have done anything worse for himself than provoke comparison of his play with Goethe's "Iphigenie." In such conjunction the respective stature of the two men must have been plain even to their contemporaries.

It was only gradually that Wilhelm Schlegel made up his mind to settle in Berlin. At first Caroline arranged her household with a view to her husband's speedy return, and she kept

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him informed of the prospect in Jena. From month to month she expected him home, and after his visit to her, in the autumn of 1801, she planned from month to month to follow him to Berlin. Of course the support of two separate households was an inconvenient expense, and long before Caroline actually joined her husband her correspondence with him was unpleasantly taken up with disputes about money. It was not until the end of March, 1802, that she went to Berlin, and by the end of May she was writing from Jena again. The tone of two notes written to Wilhelm Schlegel while she was in the same town with him, as well as allusions in later letters, all serve to show that the visit was not a happy one. It only brought to a crisis the difficulties that for a long time had been driving them asunder. She longed to be back in Jena with Schelling by her side and the river and hills in view. Schelling came to Berlin towards the end of her visit, and she drove as far as Leipzig with her husband and him in a carriage lent to them by Fichte. From Leipzig she continued her journey accompanied by Schelling only; and she found her house in Jena made comfortably ready

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under Hegel's supervision. Schelling had written and asked him to take care of this.

From the time of her return to Jena, in the spring of 1802, Caroline and Wilhelm Schlegel considered that their marriage was at an end. They did not apply for a divorce immediately because old Frau Michaelis was ill, and Caroline did not wish to disturb her with the news. So little did Schelling and Caroline concern themselves about public opinion that they arranged to spend the summer in travelling together, and afterwards to go on to Italy, although their marriage was still impossible. And Schelling did not hesitate to suggest that his parents should invite his friend, Madame Schlegel, to visit them. "For many years she has been my truest friend," he wrote; "she takes an interest in all that concerns me. . . . You will make my visit longer and pleasanter by offering her your hospitality. . . . You will find her not only a very intelligent woman, but very sweet and good besides. Her company will be a pleasure to my mother and sister, and to you too." Caroline, in writing to tell Julie Gotter that Friedrich Schlegel and Dorothea had gone to Paris in order that they might celebrate their

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marriage, adds: "You are not one of those who think I must of necessity travel to Paris. . . . Why should I not remain here in peace and quietness?"

These plans, however, were given up, and Caroline spent the summer in Jena: but not in peace and quietness. An abominable story that had distressed her when Auguste died was raked up again, and for the first time reached Schelling's ears. It was nothing less than a report that Schelling had caused Auguste's death by interfering with the regular medical treatment and giving her a fatal dose of opium. To his harassed mind it sounded like a charge of murder. The doctor who had attended Auguste encouraged the scandal to save his own reputation. Wilhelm Schlegel had heard it whispered when he arrived in Boklet to attend Auguste's funeral, but as Schelling was ill at the time it was carefully kept from him. Caroline, indeed, reproached her husband with having shocked and terrified her with such a story at such a time. At any rate her husband behaved towards Schelling with generosity and consideration. As long as he could he kept the story from his ears, and when by accident or

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malice it got into print he took upon himself the business of contradicting it fully and publicly. Goethe was put in possession of the facts, but he did not advise an appeal for Government interference. Schelling would have liked to see the papers that had published the calumny forced to retract and apologize; he entertained the idea of bringing an action against them, and he had serious thoughts of throwing up his professorship and turning his back on Jena. Finally, however, he entrusted his defence to Wilhelm Schlegel and to the two celebrated Bamberg doctors who knew all the circumstances of Auguste's last illness. A pamphlet was published by these well-informed and unimpeachable persons, containing a full and final refutation of a charge only brought and credited by Schelling's personal enemies.

Meanwhile steps were being taken towards procuring Caroline's divorce from Wilhelm Schlegel, and on this subject, as on all others, her husband corresponded with her lover in the friendliest tone. Indeed, the letters written at this period passed for the most part between the two men. After her return from Berlin Caroline wrote very rarely to her husband, and

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only on business matters. A monument to Auguste, designed and executed by Tieck's brother, was necessarily a subject of correspondence, and so was the manner of applying for a divorce. The form of this was drawn up by Caroline, and presented through an influential friend to the Grand Duke, who had the power of declaring to the proper officials that a marriage was to be formally dissolved. Thus they were saved the expense and publicity of the ordinary proceedings. The application gives as reasons for the dissolution of the marriage the absence of children, and the necessity, occasioned by the husband's pursuits and the wife's ill-health, of supporting two separate establishments. An assurance follows that the request is not made rashly or in anger, but after long and serious consideration, and with regard to the well-being of both parties. It was sent in and approved of, and on May 17, 1803, Caroline found herself free to marry whom she pleased again.

In a letter to Julie Gotter she explains that the harmony of her life with Schlegel had long been at an end; that she felt herself a clog on his career, and that her failure to bring him

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children had been a grief to both. "Children," she says, "would have made the union between us binding; as it is, we have always considered it voluntary. . . . I ought to have been more prudent and never consented to a marriage that my mother's entreaties rather than my own wishes brought about. Schlegel ought always to have been merely my friend, as all his life he has been so loyally and nobly."

After spending a few days in Weimar for the purpose of consulting with Goethe on the designs for Auguste's tomb-stone, Schelling and Caroline left for the parsonage at Murrhardt, near Stuttgart. They arrived there on Whit-Monday, and were warmly received by Schelling's relations. On a scrap of paper found after his death there are the following notes in his handwriting:

Arrived in Murrhardt on Whit-Monday, May 30, 1803.
June 26th.—In the afternoon father married us.
June 28th.—We went to Cannstadt.
August 4th.—Came back to Murrhardt.
August 28th.—Went to Stuttgart.

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THE ROMANTICS ARE SCATTERED.

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XI.

THE ROMANTICS ARE SCATTERED.

HE *Athenæum* was not a long-lived publication. The sixth number, which appeared in the first summer of the nineteenth century, was also the last. Its sale had almost entirely depended on the sensation it created. When the public had satisfied its curiosity as to the lengths the new school of moralists and critics would go, it left off buying what seemed such immoral and irreverent literature. It was not even amusing and easy to understand.

At first several projects for a new Romantic review were discussed. A quarrel with the most important journal to which Wilhelm

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Schlegel had contributed made the need for a new medium pressing. A scheme was suggested by Wilhelm Schlegel for a new *Jahrbuch*, to which all the different men in sympathy with the school should be welcome. Unfortunately this came to nothing, because Fichte and Schelling, instead of helping forward an undertaking that promised to be so valuable, hindered it by insisting on a separate *Jahrbuch* of their own. This also fell through. The Schlegels published two volumes of "Charakteristiken und Kritiken," which contained some of their best articles. Several leading German journals opened their columns to the Romantic philosophers and critics—to Schelling, Schleiermacher, Tieck, and Bernhardi, and Wilhelm Schlegel determined, as we shall presently see, that he would carry on *The Athenæum* by means of lectures.

Friedrich had already tried lecturing, with the most deplorable results. After Dorothea joined him in Jena, he had spent a most miserable time, not through any fault of hers, but rather in spite of her sympathy and faith in him. He could not believe that he was not born to be a great poet, nor could he sit down

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contentedly to the humbler mission of showing his duller neighbours how admirable were other people's poems. Yet just this he could have done so well. But he must needs spend long and weary days in chasing ideas and rhymes that still eluded him. The poor fellow was stricken with the longing to produce, though each new effort might have helped to show him that he had not the power. In despair at his unproductiveness and his increasing poverty, and no doubt excited too by the thought of outshining Schelling, who was then in Bamberg, he announced a course of lectures for the autumn of 1800. At the first one there was an attempt to stop him. The academic dignity of Jena resented the introduction of the author of "Lucinde" in the university lecture-halls. One professor got up and reproached Friedrich Schlegel with his licentious views. The lecturer called him a donkey, and proceeded with his discourse. Unhappily he could not keep an audience together. Students found him so rambling, obscure, and ill-prepared, that they stayed away; and Friedrich perceiving this lost his temper and began to talk, as he said, from an "ironical" point of view. This meant

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that he took no trouble to please or to instruct hearers so unworthy of him. When Schelling returned to Jena, after Auguste's death, he found his old supremacy uninjured; and he enjoyed the triumph of seeing his would-be rival leave Jena, because he could not make a living there. Friedrich and Dorothea went to Paris, were married, and soon after entered the Roman Catholic Church. The scepticism, the revolutionary ardour, the quarrel with conventional society, all the sincere and vivid interests of his youth were, of course, benumbed. Only his inclination to mysticism increased and flourished. He continued to write on art and literature, and later on in his life he contributed towards the discovery and the study of Indian poetry. But the fire of his youth had begun to burn low, and the force of his style was gone. He lived in Vienna, where the cooking is excellent, grew stout and indifferent, and, it is said, accepted the price of his dinners from Dorothea's first husband.

Wilhelm Schlegel settled, as we know already in Berlin, and set to work at once at something solid and profitable. Through three successive winters he delivered sets of lectures on art and

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literature that finally and widely established his claim to scholarship and critical power. In the first set he laid the foundations. He explained the philosophical principles of the school, following closely in the footsteps of his good friend Schelling. He attempted, of course, to settle satisfactorily the everlasting debate as to the legitimate aim and scope of art, to define the Beautiful, to assign a proper place to the Good. The German critics say that he succeeded very well, and that the common opinions of the day on these subjects have really filtered down through popular writers from these lectures. The second course was devoted to subjects more easily and generally understood. He once more expatiated on the translator's duties and ideals, setting the standard as high as might be, and insinuating that one man only had reached it. And then, to make his words good, he read extracts from his own work. He even came to the conclusion that all poetry, even the rarest and highest, was in a manner translation (I do not profess to explain what he meant), and at this period of his life the inclination to render in his own tongue anything that struck him in a foreign one had become quite a

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mania. For his countrymen it was a very happy and fortunate one. The discussion of translations naturally led him on to the discussion of those foreign literatures he wished to make familiar in his country. He lectured on Spanish and Italian poetry, especially on Calderon, on Dante, and on the Romantic trio, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Ariosto; and he stirred Germans to an interest and a pride in their own mediæval literature, in the Nibelungenlied, and in the lovely lyrical poetry of the Minnesingers, thus contributing his share towards waking in his countrymen a keener devotion to national traditions, a more ardent and united national ambition. In attracting public attention to these long buried treasures he found manifold opportunities of dwelling on the defects of fashionable favourites. He lost no chance of exposing the shallowness and immorality of the popular novels, and he attacked Wieland with a severity that was almost too savage for the occasion. He insisted on Goethe's true position, high above every other German poet of the past or present; but that Schiller should come next he had no suspicion. He gave scant praise to

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Schiller's poetry, and poured contempt on his philosophical division of poetry into the naïve and the sentimental. Schlegel, of course, preferred the division of classic and romantic, and he gave point and meaning to the latter term by defining it to be reflective poetry—a combination, in short, of poetry and philosophy. This, in the end, describes the literature and the social experiments of the German Romantics. They were the outcome of the new philosophy taught by Kant and Fichte and Schelling, of the lessons in freedom and licence learned from the French Revolution, and of the immense influence exercised by Goethe on his generation. Friedrich Schlegel showed in "Lucinde" what anarchy of spirit men might arrive at, starting from a rash and exaggerated misconception of Fichte's doctrine of individual liberty and responsibility. Sown broadcast in a time of political discontent, it came to light again in shapes and in places in which its begetter would have been the first to condemn it. Schelling, who loved poetry so well that he thought at one time of publishing his "Transcendental Idealism" in poetical form, constructed a Romantic Pantheism most attractive to young

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and melancholy admirers of Goethe. Nature became the manifestation of the Soul of the World which is all-pervading and intelligent: she was Spirit materialized, the outward and visible garment of that Spirit of which we too are modes. These, at any rate, are the ideas many of the Romantics gathered from Schelling's philosophy and embodied in their works. Born in a world that for generations past had set its foot on poetry, the Romantics attempted to create a new world that should be poetry and nothing else. In their writings they ignored the realities of life, and in their behaviour they showed the most distressing inability to deal with practical necessities. The ideal world each one longed to inhabit, as a mediæval dreamer may have longed to reach the Happy Isle of Avilion—this ideal world, mistily shaped by the Romantic faith, was one in which art, beauty, and emotion held the supreme sway. In this moonlit region, far from the conflicts, the triumphs, and the failures of humanity, and separated as dreams are from the round of toil and trouble that dawn brings to us all, the Romantics tried to live satisfactory lives and to create a lasting literature.

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It is not surprising that in such a world artists should be the only persons of any account; and we find, in fact, that throughout the works of the Romantic School a certain phase of the artistic temperament characterizes every one of the men and women intended to rouse interest and admiration. The peculiarity of the Romantic ideal was its satisfaction with mere temperament. "It is not his art and his works that make the artist," wrote Friedrich Schlegel, "but his perception, his enthusiasm, and his desire." And we find in his "Lucinde," in Tieck's "Sternbald," and also in the later followers of the school, in Brentano Arnino, Hoffman, and others, an exaltation of dreamy and susceptible natures whose passive perception of beauty is their only claim to rank with the noble army of workers in art. The Romantic artists who figured in the flood of "Kunstler Romane" that followed "Wilhelm Meister," as the echo of thunder amongst the hills follows the peal, with an ever weaker resonance; these Romantic artists, with their long hair, their strange garments, and their self-conscious melancholy, considered caprice and indolence adorning virtues. Every indolent vagabond

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who found it pleasanter to lie in the sun than to do a day's work, sentimentalized about his artistic nature, and met reproach by making Genius, of whom he said he was born, responsible. This clash between the real world and the world they dreamed of, destroyed their capacity for happiness. Everything they touched turned to a fantastic and sombre hue. Hideous and horrible subjects attracted them; even the link between Man and Nature that seemed to Schelling a beautiful and strengthening truth, became in the hands of some of his followers an additional means of terrible suggestion. Hoffman's stories are like a delirious dream in which a sick man's lifeless surroundings — the bed, the wall-paper, the medicine bottle — are charged with venomous intention and power. And in most of the German Romantic poems and stories the human attributes with which natural objects were invested only served to cast a deeper gloom on their relation to human life.

As an exclusive and united body the Romantic School was not long lived. Caroline's marriage with Schelling took place after most members of the little band had gone from Jena. Friedrich

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Schlegel was in Paris, his brother and Schleiermacher in Berlin, Tieck in Rome, Novalis, Wackenroder, and Hölderlin were dead. "Ah, how the little circle once gathered together in Jena is scattered over the world now, teaching the heathen!" wrote Caroline from Munich in 1807. Many of the men best known in the Romantic School hardly came into her life at all. Novalis she knew as Friedrich's intimate friend, Wackenroder and Hölderlin she probably never saw, Tieck she knew well, and Brentano slightly. The others were after her time. From the date of her marriage with Schelling she took little interest in any one but her young husband. Her late associates were, for the most part, out of sight, and to all intents and purposes out of mind. They had parted from each other and taken diverse ways to fame and fortune. Some of them were still to do lasting and remarkable work in the world, some, most miserable and luckless, died insane or broken-hearted, some found an answer to their mystical and vague imaginings in the Church of Rome.

There have been Romantics, more or less extreme, in times before and since the German Romantic School. The spirit which, when un-

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checked by the sense of humour or the sense of proportion, by modesty or wisdom, leads the individual to sport with the practical problems of life and morals in merely idle preference for what seems most untried, is an integral part of human nature. Weak imitations of originality are far from difficult to produce. Whenever the tyranny of custom is pierced by a real reform there will be at once a crowd of unoriginative people ready to carry on, as far as the world will let them, the easy widening of the breach. In England, in very recent times, we have an example of the process; a reform in our decorative arts, and in certain departments of literary and artistic criticism, allowed the Romantic spirit to flourish briefly again, with its mingled crop of truths and follies. Here, as in other times and places, ridicule has played its useful part in supplying, from outside, the salt which the movement needed, and so in arresting the spread of mere dissolution; and what remains is stronger and more deep-rooted than what was cleaned away.

It was much the same in Germany when people began to forget "Lucinde," and to laugh with less bitterness at the presumption and the

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affectation of the more foolish Romantics. The great truths underlying their follies received more attention. The soul of the people was stirred to perceive the existence of other worlds than a money-making one, to take an intelligent pleasure in literature, to appreciate the art treasures of the civilized world, and the natural treasures of hill and wood and river. And it was the Romantic School that first taught the German people to understand the rare and inestimable national possession that came to them with Goethe as man and poet.

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SCHELLING'S WIFE.

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XII.

SCHELLING'S WIFE.

IF Caroline had never married Schelling the record of her life would have been a stormy one throughout. Her conviction that her misfortunes were due to circumstances rather than to the defects of her own nature would never have been justified. We should then naturally suppose that in any surroundings she would soon have grown dissatisfied and prone to quarrel with her nearest neighbours. The facts of her life would show that in each position she had filled difficulties had arisen, and there would be nothing but her own assurances to persuade us that she longed for charity and peace.

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And yet, in justice to a woman whose shortcomings are more easily understood and described than the subtle charm that endeared her to so many, it is only fair to remember how small her early chances had been. Her home training had done nothing to supply her with the ballast she needed. A girl of great attraction and ability, of an emotional and restless temperament, and delicate in constitution, she was left to get what education she could from the light literature she loved and the light society that loved her. At an age when she was just beginning to tire of girlish pleasures and to discover her own powers she married a man quite unable to give her the help she needed. In an atmosphere that would have suited a commonplace woman admirably, she languished. It is not without a shock that one hears her speak of the end of her first marriage as of an escape from prison. At the same time it is indisputable that her view was the correct one. Clausthal stifled her. The errors and misfortunes of her widowhood need no recapitulation. It was with a broken heart and not a light one that she strayed. As Wilhelm Schlegel's wife her critical faculty, her literary tastes had every

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chance of growth and exercise. But her affections were starved. She discovered that even scholarship and poetry were not a substitute for love. And it was not until she was a middle-aged woman that she met Schelling, the one man who succeeded both in stimulating her intellectual powers and in holding fast her affections. As his wife she was happy and content.

That third wedding journey with a bridegroom twelve years younger than herself was one of undimmed delight. Never in her life had she written with such satisfaction, with such a thrill of joy and pride. Never before had she been mated with a man she so loved and honoured. Instead of a sorrowful and world-weary woman, Schelling found in his wife an adorable companion whose sorrows were almost swept out of sight, and who was as quick as an impressionable girl to respond to his demands on her. And in spite of her unconventional theories every line of Caroline's letters shows how well her truce with the world suits her. As long as her union with Schelling depended on the duration of his love, melancholy and discontent possessed her. Muse though she was to him

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she might any day have found herself supplanted. The security and respectability of marriage brought out her best qualities, dormant so long amidst the discomforts of a false position.

When they left Jena, Schelling and Caroline went straight to Murrhardt, a quiet little country town not far from Stuttgart. Here Caroline made friends with Schelling's father, who had been well known to her own father, Hofrath Michaelis. The other members of the family, the mother, daughter, and younger sons, received her cordially at Fritz's request, and soon admired and loved her for her own sake. After their marriage they went to Stuttgart, where by a strange chance they came across Ferdinand Huber, now Therese's husband. Caroline found that he was her neighbour in the theatre one night, and although she did not speak to him at first, a friend of Wilhelm Schlegel's, the beautiful actress, Fräulein Unzelmann, managed next day to bring about a reconciliation. From Stuttgart Schelling took his bride to Tübingen and showed her where he had studied and dreamed of the future, how the Neckar flowed beneath his window, and how tamely the deer in the

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forest ate out of his hand. From these scenes of his youth the husband and wife went on to Ulm and Munich, staying for some weeks in the Bavarian capital; and in September it was decided that the journey to Italy should be given up, and that Schelling should accept the new Chair of Philosophy just established in Wurzburg.

Caroline had sold her furniture in Jena, so that when she arrived in Wurzburg with her husband they had to begin afresh like other newly-married couples. She was not very well that winter, but in good spirits. "Even if my outward fortunes were less propitious you might feel quite content about your friend," she writes to Luise Gotter. And her worldly fortune had never been as good as it was now, for Schelling was a chosen and distinguished professor in the newly-organized university of Wurzburg. Caroline's time was much taken up with her social duties, not quite in the same way as in Jena, with a literary salon, but with formal card-parties and the entertainment of her husband's colleagues. "I read very little," she writes; "but then I have a prophet for my companion, and he imparts to me words from the mouth of God."

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In 1805 she writes as if Schelling felt unsettled in Wurzburg. In those times of war and political tumult no one in Germany knew under what rule he might be living in a week, or, if he was an official, what difference a change of dynasty would make to his prospects and his income. Towards the end of this year Caroline was still writing from Wurzburg. Her letters sound of marching armies and of the going and coming of princes. They have had soldiers quartered on them, foreign princes to entertain, and fancy prices to pay for everything. "Yet," she says, "one's interest in these events is so great that one cannot be attuned to melancholy by the thought of what might happen to oneself. . . . Schelling is in good spirits, and yet unusually serious and determined, stronger and more dignified than I can tell you; and our glorious friend has won more esteem and liking than any one here, from all the strangers." And yet Schelling's philosophy had made many enemies amongst the orthodox in Wurzburg. The Roman Catholics accused him of Protestantism, and the Protestants objected to his mysticism and Popish tendencies. He defended his opinions by explain-

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ing them in a Jena Review, but he naturally disliked the exercise of his profession in an atmosphere of warring dogmatism. In 1805 there was a new change in the government of Wurzburg. The town was given up by the Bavarian Government, and the professors of the university who were in its pay had to provide for themselves. Schelling, with the energy and promptness that marked all he did, went straight to Munich. He had only been there a few days when the king himself promised him a post at the Academy of Sciences. He stayed on in Munich, however, and took every necessary measure to secure his position there. While he was away Caroline wrote constantly, and her letters show that marriage had only deepened her affection and her reverence for her husband. There is even a touch of reluctant confession in all she says, a mingling of pride and shame and fervour such as a young girl feels in writing to her lover. Perhaps it was Schelling's twelve years on the side of youth that kept alive the uncertainty and glow of courtship. She must always have felt, in spite of his devotion to her, that those years made a danger, and no doubt the recognition of danger helped to keep her

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love steadfast. "I should have written again the moment I got your letter," she says, "if I had not been ashamed — even before you — to write so often. Make yourself well known in Munich. The more freely my Schelling shows himself the more will he win all hearts, like the sun itself." Next day she goes on with the same letter: "Still here—and without thee—may the end of the month not see me still separated from thee!" Her tone to him is never as independent and lightly playful as it has been all through her life to other people. The comparison that again suggests itself is that of a young girl writing to a lover she exalts high above herself. "I have told my lord and friend that I need more than three days," she says, when writing of her migration to Munich. "Whitsuntide I must keep without thee, oh thou my holy, holiest spirit. . . . Oh, thou dear love, when shall I worship again at the heart of my lord? . . . Farewell, I have thy picture before my eyes. . . . Of all shelters only one can give me comfort; when shall I enter thy arms once more? . . . They all say I shall not be well until I am with thee again. . . . I have just received thy letter; it has made me

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as happy as a kiss from thee—ah! could I rest my little head against thy heart! Good-bye, thou darling husband."

Caroline was detained in Wurzburg by the necessity of selling her furniture, and of winding up other business connected with a removal. It vexed her to think that the Kurfürst's cook bought Schelling's writing-table and refused to give it up again. The Kurfürst himself bought Caroline's tea-table. Just before the sale her old friend Gries had paid her a visit, and had almost worshipped the urn that had made him so many cups of tea, and been at so many high poetical discussions in her salon at Jena. He was one of many old friends and acquaintances whose names crop up in Caroline's last letters. Her life seems to round itself off like the end of an old-fashioned novel in which every one who has made an appearance at all comes to the front once more to bid good-bye. Tatter's death is mentioned in one of her sister's letters, and Meyer's life as a Mecklenburg country squire described. The disreputable Frau Forkel, who lodged with her in Mainz, and shared her prison, turns up as the wife of a man of good position. Of Therese Huber and her family there is

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constant mention after the meeting and reconciliation at Stuttgart; and on the occasion of Huber's death Therese writes an account of him, and of her own life, thereby exciting Caroline's disapproval in just the old way. Tieck and many other former associates from Jena visited her in Munich; her most remarkable guests being, as we shall see later, Wilhelm Schlegel, accompanied by Madame de Stael.

Caroline's first letters from Munich, written to her sister and to Madame Gotter in the autumn of 1805, are chiefly taken up with the terrible circumstances of the French invasion. Goethe had written to Schelling and described the day of the battle of Jena: how for seventy-two hours every one went in fear of death, and offered all he had to buy the safety of his nearest and dearest. The Frommans had to feed a hundred and thirty people for a week; a near relative of theirs was plundered to the skin, and only just escaped with his life; the town caught fire, and no one cared to save it. After the battle Frau Fromman's brother took the sick and wounded into his plundered house, and just as they were in despair for food an ox

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strayed into their garden and supplied them. Caroline assures her friends that though her husband and she have been in a tranquil country, their sympathy has gone out to the friends who were amidst such scenes. Schelling, she says, is in good health and spirits, and as well placed as he could wish. They have a quiet set of rooms with an outlook on the Tyrolese Alps; but they have furnished them very scantily, for Caroline cannot overcome her feeling that they are pilgrims on the face of the earth. In Munich they were drawn a good deal into society. Caroline, however, missed the constant interchange of simple hospitality that had been so stimulating and enjoyable in Jena. All the year round social life in Munich was flat and dead, only rousing itself at Carnival time to a spurt of gaiety. She describes a masquerade in a big public room, at one end of which a stage had been erected. In front of the stage stood chairs and tables, and all round the room ran a spectators' gallery. Every one who pleased might come. Royalty and bourgeoisie jostled each other at close quarters; for the king and queen and court made a point of being present, and of playing cards at the little tables below the stage.

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Another entertainment of this winter was the observation of experiments with the divining-rod. Caroline describes the phenomena in scientific language, and ends where everything in these days led her—at the feet of her lord. "I assure you," she says, "it has seemed all this time as if, though earthly kingdoms were destroyed, divine ones were created. This thought has often been present to me, living near Schelling; but now the fact has become clear to my vision."

Just before Christmas, 1807, she writes to tell Luise Gotter of their visitors. "We have had Frau von Stael here with her family, and Schlegel. Their visit lasted eight days, and gave us much pleasure. Schlegel was very well and in good spirits; we met on the friendliest terms, and without embarrassment. He and Schelling were inseparable. Frau von Stael, over and above all her other intelligence, had the understanding and the heart to grow very fond of Schelling. She is unusually vigorous, egoistic, and active-minded. Her looks are illumined by her mind, and they need to be. There are times, or rather costumes, in which she looks like a *vivandière*, and yet at

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the same time one can imagine her playing 'Phædra' with the utmost tragic expression."

The next letter Caroline wrote was to her sister, to acknowledge the news of their mother's death. Frau Michaelis had been living for some time with her daughter, Luise Wiedemann, at Kiel, and the last months of her life had been so gloomy and unhappy that the end came as a release. The circumstances of her death were very sad. Her daughter Luise was prevented, through the state of her own health, from nursing her mother, or even seeing her. Her son Philip could not leave his patients. Caroline was far away. The elder son, Fritz, was at Marburg. Caroline writes very tenderly and gently of her mother, and is carried back by the date of her decease to the death of her young husband, Dr. Böhmer. It was twenty years ago that she stood at his bedside and thought her own life as well as his was over.

In the summer of 1808 Schelling's promotion and the increase of his salary gave great pleasure to Caroline, although she considered that his merits had only been tardily recognized. In the autumn husband and wife had a pleasant expedition to the Bavarian Highlands. The

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journey to Italy so often planned and thought of had never yet come off, and in the last spring of her life she says to her sister, she fears she will die like Moses, without seeing the Promised Land. "This is a dismal summer," she writes, in August, 1809, to Pauline Gotter: "bad weather, war, and high prices; and, to make the measure full, Schelling has been ill for six weeks—not seriously, I must add. . . . Now we think of getting quite strong in his native air, and of going in a week to his parents in Wurtemberg, not far from the French frontier, for his father is now at Maulbronn. By the end of September we shall be here again." She goes on to give Pauline a warm invitation to stay with them on their return, little thinking that when the girl did go to Munich it would be as Schelling's second wife, years later. On their way to Würtemburg Caroline and her husband found the roads swarming with troops and the material of war. But they got safely to the quiet country parsonage scarcely reached in those days by news of the outside world. They left it in August to spend a few days in Stuttgart with Beate Grosz, Schelling's married sister; and the last letter Caroline wrote was

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the one addressed to her after this visit. From the 1st to the 3rd of September Caroline was away on a little walking tour, and came home apparently quite well. In a long letter to Luise Gotter, Schelling describes the last few days of his wife's life. He says that her constant attention to him during his illness had weakened her, but that she seemed to enjoy travelling. It was at her wish that they set out for the walking tour which he now feels certain she should not have attempted. While they were away she was cheerful, but strangely quiet, and he, having felt depressed all the summer, longed to be at home with her again. The first news they got on their return to Maulbronn was of the reappearance of an epidemic from which he had saved Caroline three years ago by taking her away at once. This year she seemed so well and strong that such a measure seemed unnecessary. The evening of their return Caroline fell ill, but no one supposed that the prevalent fever had attacked her. Early the next day, however, as her husband stood by her bedside, she said, "I feel destruction making such swift progress that I think this time I might die."

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"At the first glance," continues Schelling, "the striking change in her face showed me how violent was the attack; when I felt her pulse I was terrified. I talked her out of her fears, although I could not quite conceal my own. . . . I put her in the care of the Maulbronn doctor, a man who is considered clever by every one, and who has treated patients for this same illness throughout the district. A messenger was sent to Stuttgart to fetch my brother, who has a great reputation here, and in whom Caroline placed absolute faith. Unfortunately he came too late to help. . . . The terrible pain that accompanies this illness she bore, through one day only, with the greatest fortitude and genuine courage. . . . The last evening she felt easy and cheerful; the whole beauty of her sweet soul shone out again; the tone of her voice, always lovely, sounded like music; her spirit seemed to be free already, and to be hovering about her before taking its flight. She fell asleep on the morning of the 7th of September, tranquilly, without a struggle. Even in death she was full of grace; when she was dead she lay with the loveliest turn of the head, with an expression of gaiety and fine

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contentment on her face. Oh, as long as she lay there, as long as I could weep over her, I was not quite unhappy. I never came away without feeling strengthened and consoled—so bright was her expression. . . . This was the end of your—of my—Caroline. . . . To me is left the eternal pain that death only can relieve—that only memory can sweeten—the memory of the loveliest spirit, the finest nature, the truest heart; and these I could once, in the fullest sense, call mine. My everlasting gratitude to this noble woman follows her to her grave. God gave her to me, Death cannot take her away."

No mere summary of Caroline's virtues could leave her so eloquently defended as her husband's letter does. It bears witness to depths in her nature that had only been reached by the light and warmth of his love. The most indifferent and distant acquaintance perceived that she was an attractive and a brilliantly gifted woman. Schelling, her dearest and most intimate friend, knew her to be unselfish, true, and good. It is only justice to her, then, that we should read Schelling's latest judgment of her last of all. The fact that she became so

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much to him helps to show in its truest light a character which, with all its obvious shortcomings, could at least respond generously to the warmth of Schelling's sunny mind.

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APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX.

Extracts from Letters[1] of Caroline to Wilhelm Schlegel.

1797?

. . . . The play is full of life and meaning, and yet so simple. There are no enigmas in it. The character of the Friar is profound without being obscure. He is not a saint, but a kind old man, gently meditative and observant, almost sublime in his close communion with nature, and extremely attractive, even piquant (if I may say so) in his understanding of men. His knowledge of the world is enriched with gaiety and wit. He is quick to adapt himself to circumstances, and to make the most of them. Daring

[1] The originals are numbered 129 and 130 in Prof. Waitz's collection of Caroline's letters.

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in his counsel and his decisions, he nevertheless grasps the full gravity of the situation. He seems to have nothing of the monk in him except an aptitude for dissimulation and a certain physical timidity. He is free from personal ambition, and from selfish prudence, when there is any question of doing good; and is straightforward and brave when called upon to face a danger. It is an extraordinary thing to say, but this Friar is a very likeable creature, and the first scene in which he appears serves to bring out a strength of character that commands reverence as well as love. He does what the young people want him to do, but he seems to yield less to their impetuosity than to an almost saintly perception, or understanding, of the nature of passionate love. He appeals to Juliet's heroism, he admonishes her to constancy in love as to a virtue of high excellence, and he seems to know beforehand that he will not be deceived in her—in her whose passion is already one with her pure and loyal wifely love. Juliet is all love, and yet it is impossible to take her for merely a passionate girl who wakes from childhood to fall in love as a matter of course with the first

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man she meets. These lovers seem to have been brought together by their good angel—in one look they find each other, and every word that follows repeats that look. One cannot help believing, with the lovers, that there is no room here for disappointment. Even Romeo's fickleness does not suggest a doubt—his first attachment is a shadow of the future, fancy's dream, a preparation. And though we see nothing of these lovers but their love, we see two noble and steadfast souls. Never blame Juliet for being so easily won—her innocence bids her yield without dissimulation. Nothing in Romeo can repel or offend her loving heart. She speaks with freedom to herself and to him—openly, and yet not with forwardness—nothing but what the purest soul may think. We forgive the Italian girl her vivid imagination. From the moment that she is Romeo's wife her life is irrevocably bound up with his; the thought of their separation is horrible to her; she dreads alike being torn from him and being married to any one else. When she is forced to play the hypocrite, she does it with courage, and, since her parents have forfeited her esteem, without remorse. Her soliloquy is one of Shake-

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speare's masterpieces; it is without a blemish. First the horror of her loneliness, the loneliness of the grave—then the recovery of her courage—then her natural suspicion of the Friar, which yet she thrusts from her with heroic confidence: she is greater than the hero who cannot take the draught without ostentation. . . .

. . . . Shakespeare's Juliet is so young, so sincerely passionate. . . . In one respect Romeo is like St. Preux [1]—he can neither conceal nor control his pain. But we must not demand too much from a lad. The Friar knows well enough what becomes a man, but he knows too that he is only talking to the wind, and for the edification of the nurse; yet his speech gives the despairing lover a few minutes in which to bring himself to listen to the consoler, who in promising him Juliet gives him more comfort than any philosophy can give. On other occasions Romeo's mild firmness is shown. Brave though he is, he never seeks a quarrel, and even where he does not love he seems to rise above hate—to be able to brook an insult calmly. It is only the death of his high-spirited friend that stirs him to fight.

[1] In Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise.*

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In the first rush of their despair there is unquestionably—let us put it as mildly as we will, dear friend—a certain Shakespearean ruggedness and harshness: and yet it is divine where, in the farewell scene in Juliet's chamber, the joy of love conquers their wild misery; it is melancholy, hopeful, and ominous, all at once. You must notice in this scene the wonderful blending of poetic beauty with the simplest expression of a distracted soul. The balcony scene is more romantic, but it contains just such expressions of deepest tenderness, coming straight from the heart and from an imagination full of love.

Romeo is no longer downcast—hope, young budding hope, possesses him—almost cheerfully he waits for news. Later, he himself calls his mood "a lightning before death." Such touches are quite Shakespearean. I know no one to be compared to him in sudden changes of this sort. What Romeo hears transforms his nature in a flash—two words, and he is resolved to die—to sink into the earth, which a moment before he trod with winged feet.

The next scene I like very much, and I do not consider it an interruption to the whole. One is

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reminded here of the tone of Hamlet—he too might have ended in this way if he had been obliged to procure poison.

Let Romeo's last scene speak for itself—only notice how calmly Paris strews his flowers on Juliet's grave; how differently her death affects him and her lover. And then, at the death of his rival and companion in sorrow, how Romeo's generosity breaks out like a gleam amid storm-clouds, as he speaks those last words of kindness. That is why I cannot raise the question whether the sacrifice of this good soul was necessary, or whether Romeo need have caused another death. Paris is a character that is much wanted in the play, and one to whom neither life nor death can come amiss. Shakespeare, it is true, knew nothing of a certain economy practised in modern plays—excellent enough, no doubt. Lessing's plays exemplify it—where everything that can seem superfluous is omitted, and minor characters are mentioned rather than presented; where everything is so carefully considered that not a word can be discarded without damaging the whole. Shakespeare was as lavish as Nature, who might also be accused sometimes of creating idle *rôles* and

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unnecessary events. That he does not let Rosalind appear is a wonder, for a character more or less never comes amiss to him. Perhaps Rosalind might be left out altogether without spoiling the play. And yet, in general, the more carefully you study one of Shakespeare's plays, the more you find out its harmony and coherence, so that in the end you wish to leave out nothing. (Cymbeline would hardly afford one this delight; it is incoherent, although single passages are touchingly beautiful.)

It is often said that the story, the plot, is not his own. The bare plot and the soul of the play, as I should describe the plot in its higher sense, are very different things. As Hamlet stands now, he is Shakespeare's own creation—we all know that. I imagine that it is rather an advantage to genius not to have to invent and execute at the same time. Would not the fact that the raw material comes from outside be likely to leave the poet more room to originate touches of beauty in the process of building up the loosely connected details into a truthful whole. And from such a whole, with its seeming contradictions, we get that "higher

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plot," the marvellous soul of the play, which we are never tired of fathoming in search of its endless hidden truths. I do not remember the legend of Hamlet, but probably the end was like the end of the tragedy, in which chance rather than Hamlet undertakes the revenge. And to whom do we owe Hamlet? In Romeo Shakespeare found far more material ready to his hand, and though he has taken exactly what was given, yet how completely he has made it his own! The characters help the story forward, and give it a most vivid appearance of truth. The gusty temper of Juliet's father, and the coarse behaviour of both her parents, are repulsive enough, yet Juliet is thereby saved from a struggle between passion and filial love, and freed from all blame. Such a struggle would have been out of place; blame may be left to Johnson's severity. I must say that none of the father's abuse is so offensive as the mother's phrase, "I would the fool were married to her grave." Such a sentence as that I should like to translate away. If it is only a coarse, thoughtless expression, why should one not do this? Seldom has one so good a right to avoid a literal translation. In Margaret's

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mouth (in *Richard III.*) I would not suppress a single curse; and I would let Lady Macbeth say, "I have given suck, and know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me," instead of "I have no children," &c. But a discord like this, where all else is so harmonious, gives pain. I leave Mercutio and the nurse to you, and to their own chattering tongues.

And whether Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy, you and Friedrich may decide. . . .

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